FIRST THINGS

LIVING LIFE'S END
Gil Meilaender

THE INCONVENIENT CONSCIENCE
George Cardinal Pell

FOR TORAH AND CULTURE
David Singer

THE RETURN OF STUDS LONIGAN
Bette Howland

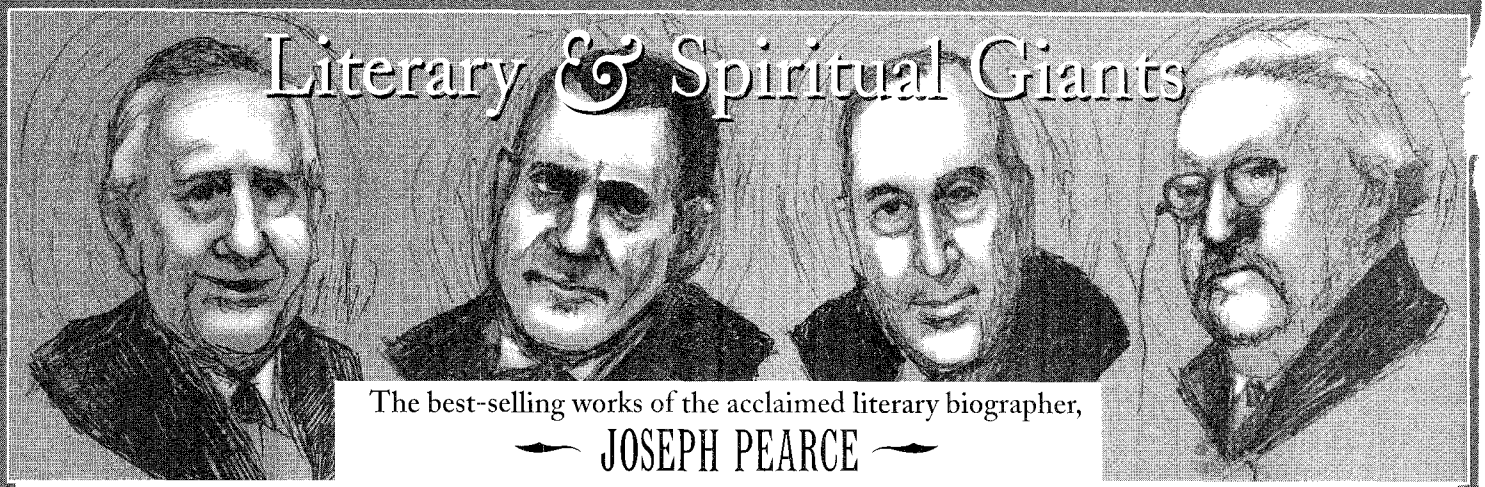
Peter J. Leithart *on Buddhism and the West*
Rodney Delasanta *on gardens of good and evil*
Robert T. Miller *on the death of Terri Schiavo*

BOOKS *Stephen M. Barr • Gregory Wolfe*
Ishmael Law • Paul J. Griffiths

THE PUBLIC SQUARE *Richard John Neuhaus*
IN THIS ISSUE: *Remembering and Forgetting*

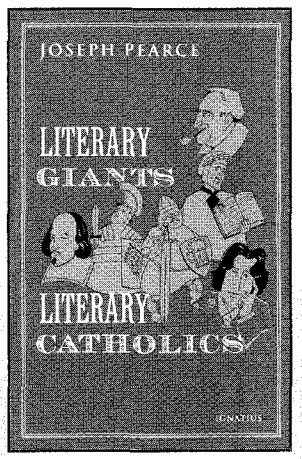
May 2005 • Number 153 • $4.25/$5.25 Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The best-selling works of the acclaimed literary biographer,

JOSEPH PEARCE



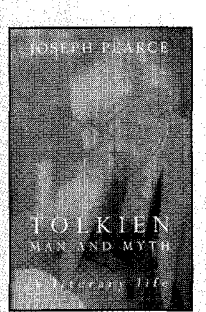
LITERARY GIANTS, LITERARY CATHOLICS

British author Joseph Pearce has firmly established himself as the premier literary biographer of our time, especially in interpreting the spiritual depths of the Catholic literary tradition. In this new book, Pearce examines a plethora of authors, taking the reader through a dazzling tour of the creative landscape of Catholic prose and poetry. *Literary Giants, Literary Catholics* covers the vast terrain from Dante to Tolkien, from Shakespeare to Waugh.

Focusing on the literary revival of the 20th century, Joseph Pearce touches on well-known authors like G.K. Chesterton and J.R.R. Tolkien, but also introduces readers to lesser-known writers like Roy Campbell, Maurice Baring, and Owen Barfield. Anyone who appreciates English literature will be entranced by the wealth and depth of this new masterpiece.

480 pages, Sewn Hardcover, $24.95

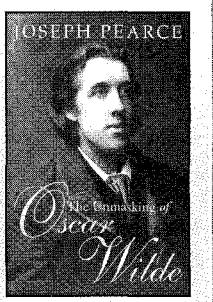
Tolkien: Man and Myth



J.R.R. Tolkien is one of the most popular writers of our age. His *Lord of the Rings* was voted the greatest book of the century in several British surveys. This major new study of his life and his work explores the background of the man and the culture in which he wrote, and his relationships with other great literary writers, including C.S. Lewis.

257 pp, Sewn Softcover, $14.95

The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde



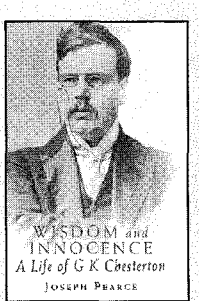
Vilified by Victorians for his sexuality and his dandyism, Wilde, the poet, satirist and playwright, is hailed today as a sexual liberator. But this is not how he saw himself. His actions and pretensions did not bring him happiness. This study of his brilliant and tragic life goes beyond his notoriety in order to explore his spiritual search, tracing his fascination with Catholicism through to his eleventh-hour conversion.

400 pp, Sewn Hardcover, $19.95

C.S. Lewis and the Catholic Church

Pearce, highly regarded literary biographer and great admirer of Lewis, is the ideal writer to try to answer questions about the relationship of Lewis to the Roman Catholic Church, an important and intriguing topic of interest to both Catholics and Protestants. Pearce delves into all the issues, questions, and factors regarding this puzzling question.

208 pp, Sewn Softcover, $14.95



Wisdom and Innocence

A Life of G.K. Chesterton

Through years of meticulous research and access to the literary estate of G.K. Chesterton, Pearce presents a major biography of a 20th century literary giant, providing much important information on GKC never before published. A thoroughly delightful biography. *Illustrated.* *536 pp, Quality Softcover, $19.95*

Literary Converts

A biographical exploration into the spiritual lives of some of the greatest writers in the English language: Oscar Wilde, Evelyn Waugh, C.S. Lewis, Graham Greene, Ronald Knox, Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, T.S. Eliot, Malcolm Muggeridge, J.R.R. Tolkien, and more. Touches on some of the most important questions of the twentieth century.

465 pp, Sewn Hardcover, $24.95

Old Thunder *A Life of Hilaire Belloc*

Hilaire Belloc is one of the most important, revered and reviled writers of the twentieth century. In this biography, Joseph Pearce examines the lasting impact of this prolific writer and social commentator on today's Church and society. With access to previously unpublished material, this biography uncovers a romantic, complex, and solitary character.

320 pp, Sewn Hardcover, $24.95

ignatius press

1-800-651-1531 • www.ignatius.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

May 2005 • Number 153

RECEIVED
APR 18 2005
BALDWIN-WALLACE
RITTER LIBRARY

Correspondence

2 Duel over dualism; I-it? I-thou?; a convert and his kin; Islamic liberty; Jews and Jesus; defending the bishops; social justice in Sodom; correcting a correction

Opinion

Peter J. Leithart 11 When East is West
Rodney Delasanta 13 Gardens of Good and Evil
Robert T. Miller 14 The Legal Death of Terri Schiavo

Articles

Gilbert Meilaender 17 Living Life's End
George Cardinal Pell 22 The Inconvenient Conscience
David Singer 27 For Torah and Culture
Bette Howland 33 The Return of Studs Lonigan

Books

Stephen M. Barr 39 Science and the Trinity by John C. Polkinghorne
Gregory Wolfe 43 The Finishing School by Muriel Spark
Ishmael Law 47 God on the Quad by Naomi Schaefer Riley
Paul J. Griffiths 49 Truth and Tolerance by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
52 Briefly Noted

The Public Square

Richard John Neuhaus 56 Remembering and Forgetting, *etc.*

Poetry

A.E. Stallings (26, 32), *Mark Jarman* (38)

First Things (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $34 per year ($14.97 for students) by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things, P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Email:** firstthingsadsales@pma-inc.net. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Subscription Phone:** (877) 905-9920. **Email:** frth@kable.com. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846. Copyright © 2005 by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *Joseph Bottum*
Associate Editor: *Matthew Boudway*
Managing Editor: *Erik Ross*
Editorial Assistant: *Kristen Linton*
Poetry Editor: *Anthony Lombardy*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service:
Publishing Management Associates

EDITORIAL BOARD

Midge Decter
Timothy George
Mary Ann Glendon
Gilbert Meilaender
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL
ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
Stephen M. Barr
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
Suzanne Garment
Robert George
Carl F. H. Henry
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Robert Louis Wilken

CORRESPONDENCE

Duel over Dualism

Dualists hold that the human person consists of both a soul (or mind) and a body. For healthy, fully-functioning human beings, the person is a unified subject, but at times such as physical death, dualists hold that persons (souls or minds) can survive the destruction of their bodies.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God—it is not 'produced' by the parents—and also that it is immortal: it does not perish when it separates from the body at death, and it will be reunited with the body at the final Resurrection." In his address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in 1996, Pope John Paul II said, "It is by virtue of his spiritual soul that the whole person possesses such a dignity even in his body. Pius XII stressed this essential point: if the human body takes its origin from pre-existent living matter, the spiritual soul is immediately created by God."

St. Thomas Aquinas is sometimes described as opposing dualism. Indeed, as a follower of Aristotle he at times is readily thought of as claiming that the soul is the mere form of the body. But for St. Thomas the soul is no mere form as in shape; it is a subsistent being, requiring a special creation by God and capable of existing independently of the human animal body. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, St. Thomas writes: "Now, it pertains to the human soul distinctively, in contrast to other forms, to be subsisting in its being.... But since the human soul does not have matter as part of itself, it cannot be made from something as from matter. It therefore remains that the soul is made from nothing. And thus, it ... is created immediately by God alone."

Regrettably, the term "dualism" today has become encrusted with assumptions that denigrate the body, such as the view that the body is a mere tool or instrument or, worse, that the body is some kind of prison that has entrapped our souls. Of course, there can be times of severe damage when the mind-body relationship is fractured, as with prosopagnosia (when a person can lose the ability to recognize other humans by their faces despite having good eye sight) or when physical damage causes one to experience "phantom limbs." But dualists today (who include many scientists and philosophers) recognize the radical interdependence of mind and body.

In "Dualistic Delusions" (February), Patrick Lee and Robert P. George rightly note that the denial of dualism, materialism, is not established by the fact that physical damage causes psychological damage. In fact, the practice of the medical sciences seems to assume the causal interaction between the physical and the mental. If one were to restrict the study of persons to the language of neurology, one would not be able to study the experience of persons.

Why then do Professors Lee and George reject dualism? They seem to believe that dualism is linked to a range of highly questionable moral positions, including sexual liberalism, same-sex marriage, and abortion on demand. We do not see any evident link here. Because dualists today (and most historically) have insisted upon the profound interconnection between mind and body in this life, they are no more likely to promote sexual liberalism or same-sex marriage than a materialist or Aristotelian. With abortion, the con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nection between dualism and what is immoral may seem more likely, on the grounds that (absent a developed brain and nervous system) it is highly unlikely that at conception or within the first week the fetus has any consciousness or feeling.

But dualism is not committed to the idea that the soul (person or mind) only exists when it is conscious. The Roman Catholic philosopher René Descartes held that view in the seventeenth century, but it is not representative of all dualists either then or today. Dualists are certainly not committed to holding that if you ever undergo a completely non-conscious state during sleep that you cease to be and then come back into existence when you wake up. Incidentally, many of the religious and philosophical opponents to slavery in the modern era were committed dualists, arguing that Africans, Native Americans, and others were (like Europeans) united souls and bodies. Their opposition to slavery is borne out in Richard Popkin's studies of eighteenth-century racism.

Profs. Lee and George claim that belief in dualism is a delusion that is at odds with Catholic faith. We believe it is central to Catholic faith and practice and that, across the board in terms of the Eastern Orthodox and Protestants, dualism is central and not just the teaching of a select few thinkers such as St. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and so on.

Three ways in which dualism may be seen as a central component of Catholic teaching concern birth, death, and the incarnation. We have already noted the role of dualism in thinking about birth and death, though we add briefly that if human persons are literally the very same things as their animal bodies (as Profs. Lee and George contend), then the annihilation of their bodies must count as an annihilation of them. The whole idea of praying to a saint whose body you are venerating would make no sense if the saint is the animal body and not also a soul that is capable of existing independently of the body. The incarnation also becomes problematic given Profs. Lee and George's anthropology. If Jesus Christ is (literally) the very same thing as the animal body born to Mary, then he did not preexist that animal body. It is because most Christians believe in the soul that they believe that the incarnation was literally an incarnation, the taking on of flesh and blood by the one who existed before the moment of incarnation and who dwelt in the world as the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth.

We have argued elsewhere for a positive philosophical case for dualism. Here we are principally interested in engaging Profs. Lee and George's provocative, important article, challenging them and our readers to reconsider the orthodoxy of dualism.

Stewart Goetz
Ursinus College
Collegeville, Pennsylvania

Charles Taliaferro
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

Patrick Lee and Robert P. George reply:

We are grateful to our friends Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro for their challenge to our critique of body-self dualism. They believe that a form of dualism is philosophically defensible and, indeed, that it is taught by the Catholic Church and was embraced by St. Thomas Aquinas. We disagree.

The Council of Vienne (1311-1312) solemnly defined the proposition that the human soul, is "*per se* and essentially the form of the body." The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* unambiguously reaffirms this teaching: "spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature." What is *per se* and essentially a form is necessarily distinct from the whole. Thus, the

Junior Fellowship Available

FIRST THINGS has openings for junior fellows, beginning in the fall of 2005.

These are one-year internships for young writers and scholars interested in religion and public life. The positions offer the opportunity to participate in the magazine's writing and production, the theological and political discussion groups the magazine sponsors, and the religious, cultural, and intellectual events that cluster around FIRST THINGS in New York City. The positions include free housing and a modest stipend.

Send applications with résumé, writing sample, and references to: Erik Ross, Managing Editor, FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010.

Editorial Position Available

FIRST THINGS has an opening for an associate editor, beginning in the late summer of 2005.

Candidates should be familiar with issues relating to religion, culture, and public life. Relevant fields include philosophy, history, theology, ethics, literature, and political theory.

Applicants should also possess excellent literary and editing skills. The position involves all aspects of the editorial and production process. Strong computer skills are required, and knowledge of Macintosh environment and Quark layout desirable. Salary and benefits competitive.

Send applications with résumé, writing sample, and references to: Joseph Bottum, Editor, FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Church teaches that the body is an essential part of the person, not a distinct being with which the person or the self interacts.

St. Thomas Aquinas held—as we do—that the human soul *subsists* (has its existence of itself and not through the existence of the whole human being) and could not have emerged from matter and material forces but must be directly created by God. But he also vigorously defended the propositions that the human soul is *incomplete* in its nature and that the human person is not the soul but is rather the composite of body and soul. Commenting on St. Paul's assertion that if there is no resurrection then our faith is in vain, St. Thomas wrote that this is because I am not saved unless my body is saved. Why? St. Thomas squarely faced the question and could not have been clearer in answering it: Because "my soul is not I."

Regarding abortion, our claim was not that body-self dualism *entails* acceptance of abortion, but that it *facilitates* it and is an implicit (and sometimes explicit) premise in many pro-abortion arguments. By contrast, we argue that since a human person is a physical organism, then he or she comes to be when that organism comes to be—namely, at conception.

This point, however, was not (*pace* Goetz and Taliaferro), our reason for rejecting body-self dualism. We proposed an argument against that position from the fact that sensation is a bodily act, and that it must be the same agent, the same "I," that senses and is self-conscious or engages in conceptual thought.

Profs. Goetz and Taliaferro claim that their type of dualism does not lead to viewing the body as a mere extrinsic tool and so does not imply sexual liberalism. Here and in other writings they stress that soul and body belong together in a harmonious relationship, and Taliaferro has described his position as an "integrative dualism."

We believe such steps are in the right direction, but we also think that to set out an intelligible account of the harmony between body and soul one must, in the end, recognize them as co-principles of a single substance, the rational animal. If the body is distinct from the self, then it is difficult to conceive how the soul and the body could be harmoniously related in a way that is truly perfective of the soul. By contrast, if one concedes that the human soul naturally needs the body (shown by how we understand and will), then one also should grant that the soul is internally oriented to naturally cooperating with bodily organs, and that the soul is in its nature incomplete—that is, naturally only a part of the whole human being.

We are happy that Profs. Goetz and Taliaferro agree with us on issues in sexual ethics, but to give an intelligible account of sound sexual ethics, one must start with the truth that in the marital act husband and wife are truly united as one flesh. Yet, if the body is an entity separate from the self, it is difficult to see how sexual union could be so significant that it should take place only as part of the comprehensive union of persons in a marriage.

With respect to intercessory prayer to the saints, we must begin by clearing away a misunderstanding. We do not identify the person (St. Peter or anyone else) with *only* the animal body, any more than with the soul alone. Our position is precisely the position of the Church and of St. Thomas Aquinas: The person is the composite of soul and body. Is this position incompatible with belief in intercessory prayers to saints? St. Thomas sees no incompatibility, nor do we. Despite his emphatic rejection of body-self dualism, he plainly teaches that the souls of the saints, though incomplete pending the resurrection of the body, can hear our prayers and add their prayers to ours. The teaching of the Church is that the souls of the saints possess the powers of intellect and will, and it can be inferred that they are supplied with knowledge of particulars by having infused knowledge from God. Beyond that, the matter is shrouded in mystery for us humans. Envisaging the circumstances of the afterlife goes beyond what our natural cognitive abilities are proportioned to, namely, material things—we are able to understand something about purely spiritual things (whether through reason or through revelation) only through negation and analogy.

Concerning the Incarnation, Profs. Goetz and Taliaferro say, "If Jesus Christ is (literally) the very same thing as the animal body born to Mary, then he did not pre-exist that animal body." But it seems to us that our friends have fallen into confusion on this point. The faith of the Church is that Jesus Christ is one divine person who exists for eternity, with a divine nature and a human nature (Council of Chalcedon). So Jesus Christ did pre-exist being conceived in Mary's womb, for the divine person (and the divine nature, which is to say, the divine nature as communicated from the Father to the Son) pre-exists the Incarnation. It also is true, however, that with the Incarnation, the human nature of Christ—body and soul—comes to be as personally united (thus a hypostatic union) to the eternal Word. So, Jesus Christ is the living human animal body born to Mary, because he is both God and man. He was not man before the Incarnation, but he existed eternally as a divine person with the divine nature.

Their further assertion, "It is because most Christians believe in the soul that they believe that the Incarnation was literally an incarnation," is, we think, highly misleading. It is *de fide* (of faith) that the Word became flesh, that he assumed a human body, not just an appearance of one (contrary to Docetism). But the Incarnation is not just the assumption of the body (which is the Appolli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

narian heresy). Rather, the Incarnation is the assumption of a whole human nature, both body and soul. Thus, the Church's teaching on the Incarnation presupposes that Christ's human nature includes both a soul and a body, which is true of our human nature as well.

I-It? I-Thou?

For almost thirty-five years, it has been my privilege to be involved in what Shalom Carmy ("Orthodoxy and Reticence," February) disparagingly calls "official dialogues" between Catholics and Jews. Many of these have included representatives of Orthodox Judaism. Because of Rav Soloveitchik's dictum, we have avoided calling these encounters "dialogues," using instead the term "ongoing consultations." Rabbi Carmy's line of reasoning does not reflect an adequate understanding of the encounters in which I have taken part.

Reducing the ongoing relations between Catholics and Jews to a mere "transaction between organizations" misses the point of the endeavor. Rabbi Carmy quotes my dear friend and colleague Rabbi Walter Wurzburger, of blessed memory. But I am not sure that Rabbi Carmy has grasped the meaning of Rabbi Wurzburger's reference to the Rav's "wry remark," which would seem to affirm rather than to reject (as Carmy would have it) a joint consideration by Jews and Christians of the meaning of Genesis on "man as the image of God."

It is true that official consultations over the past three decades have spent a lot of time discussing our respective communal agendas. I see no inherent problem with that. We are communities of people, and both sides have priorities for which we would like the support of allies. Joint statements have been made by the Holy See and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligous Consultations (which includes Orthodox representation) on the environment, family, religious freedom and holy sites, education, and most recently on "*tzedek* and *tzedakah*" (social action and righteousness) in Buenos Aires in 2004. These statements have often involved a mutual exploration of the biblical, rabbinical, and patristic roots of our common religious understandings. In a similar way, the themes of repentance and forgiveness were deeply explored in dialogues in response to the Pope's Liturgy of Repentance during the year 2000. The statements these dialogues produced are not the result of "bargaining" but of the quest for appreciation of each other in our very specific otherness.

What Rabbi Carmy calls "dialogue" is what Martin Buber termed an "I-It" relationship, as one has with one's grocer. I argue for a relationship between our two ancient communities akin to that which one has, after thirty years or so, with one's wife or husband. The Catholic Church believes it has a sacred, unbreakable bond with the Jewish People. We call it a sacramental bond. It is a relationship that we Catholics would like to understand better through ongoing relations with the Jewish people. In a good marriage, the spouses do not cease to be individuals; they become something more together.

The Church's motivation in reaching out to Jews in what the Second Vatican Council aptly called a "dialogue of mutual esteem" is not to convince Jews to "accept the divinity of Jesus" or adopt any Catholic doctrine. The Catholic Church wants to understand, as deeply as we can, what Judaism means for Jews. This understanding means a lot to us because, as Pope John Paul II acknowledged in the Great Synagogue of Rome, Jews are our "elder brothers" in faith. Knowing where we come from tells us a lot about where we are supposed to be going.

More than that, it may tell us a lot about where humanity is going. My friend Walter's apt story of the Rav comes back here. If we humans, all together, are "the image of God," that means we come from some place certain in God's will and are called to some place certain. Jews call this place the *Malchut Shamayim*. We would call it the Kingdom of God. Are we not all called to utter this unutterable mystery of God's will for humanity to humanity? It matters little whether one calls the process of seeking understanding a "discussion" or a "dialogue." It may matter greatly to human destiny that we address and proclaim the Kingdom of God together.

Dr. Eugene J. Fisher
Secretariat for Ecumenical
and Interreligious Affairs
United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops
Washington, D.C.

Shalom Carmy replies:
I cited Rabbi Soloveitchik's remark (about Jews and Christians discussing the meaning of *imago Dei*) in the course of lamenting the fact that many Jews, including some who take their religion seriously, fail to appreciate the fruitfulness of discussing such matters with Christians while at the same time remaining insensitive to the dangers of uncritically accommodating secular perspectives on the human condition. I am sorry if I failed to make this sufficiently clear.

I have no intention to insinuate, in the absence of evidence, that theological statements by serious, intelligent religious individuals are the result of "bargaining." Nonetheless, I believe that certain social and institutional frameworks generate pressure in this direction. One hopes that Dr. Fisher is not oblivious to these risks.

Insofar as Dr. Fisher agrees with me that much can be accomplished within the constraints advocated by Rabbi Soloeveitchik, the primary area of disagreement between us is rhetorical. I am suspicious of grand words pitched higher than the reality

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they describe. For me, therefore, the word "dialogue," with its elevated Buberian associations, implies a level of achieved mutuality that one may aspire to, but must be wary of presuming. Indeed, I believe that Buber's sharp dichotomy between I-Thou and I-It encounters is misleading as phenomenology. Likewise I am reluctant to employ the powerful image of marriage in describing the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People.

In a difficult world, I take comfort in the positive moral and intellectual contributions of Jews and Christians helping one another. As Dr. Fisher rightly concludes, we bear a great responsibility together.

A Convert and His Kin

As a recent Catholic convert myself, I am overjoyed to hear of the conversion of such a distinguished scholar as R.R. Reno ("Out of the Ruins," February). At the same time, I cannot help but notice the somewhat mournful and resigned tone that colors Professor Reno's apologia. For example, he interprets the Rule of St. Benedict in an essentially passive light. In strong contrast to Prof. Reno's approach is St. Edith Stein's commentary on the Rule, published in her *Essential Writings*. In it, the famous convert invokes the positive role of the Rule, called *discretione perspicua*. In her mind, "clear discretion" is a gift of the Holy Spirit that undergirds each of the classic Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is when "a soul listens in total surrender and unhampered flexibility to the soft voice of its fair Guest (the Holy Spirit) and awaits His least nod" that one obtains this gift. It does not "differentiate by thinking through a matter step-by-step . . . nor through concluding and proving," but "distinguishes the sharp outlines of things in full daylight." I hope that the insight of this eminent saint will guide Prof. Reno to a more joyful and balanced understanding of the conversion process.

Ching Yim
Woburn, Massachusetts

I am a Lutheran theologian with considerable sympathy for the horizon shared by Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Over the years, this has meant different things. Mostly it means I'm consistently more evangelical catholic than Protestant. There are a number of folks like me out there, maybe a growing number. But recently, a lot of those with evangelical catholic sensibilities seem to be converting. Reinhard Hütter, for one, Ola Tjørhom for another, and now one of the most prominent defenders of staying within one's own tradition rather than converting, R.R. Reno.

Each time I hear about one of these conversions, I think and feel a number of things. First, I think I understand at least part of what drives these theologians. They can no longer justify staying in their denomination on any grounds other than stubbornness.

But they also make the move, I think, because they are unusually free to do so. They have just retired, or are on the verge of doing so, so a conversion makes no claims on their professional status. In Professor Reno's case, it seems, his conversion does not affect his current work because his university does not require him to belong to a specific denomination.

I am a married Lutheran pastor. In my case, a conversion could not be undertaken so freely. Which is not to say that I am not sympathetic. Prof. Reno, who staked some of his academic and theological credibility on an argument for remaining, does take certain risks by converting. It is a difficult decision for anyone, and I want to honor that.

That said, I find these conversions suspicious and even angering. Maybe it's the kind of feeling you have for close kin. Love and detestation run close together. Prof. Reno makes much of having originally decided to stay in the Episcopal church because of a "theory." He has convinced himself that he loved an idea rather than a reality. But I believe his move to Rome was also motivated by love of an idea.

Prof. Reno now has a theory about what Rome is (mother church, an ocean, etc.), but this is not the reality we all know the Roman church to be. The Roman church is, like all other churches, a church "in the ruins," because it is divided from other communions, first from the East and then from the denominations that spring from the Reformation. Rome is no more the "one church" than any other church, and any claims to this status fail to acknowledge reality. They are theories and ideas of oneness.

Prof. Reno proves this to be the case in his response to a friend who was present for his acceptance into the Roman church. When asked about what it was like to be received, Prof. Reno responded, "It felt like being submerged into the ocean."

I'm sorry, but that's a silly thing to say. The Roman Catholic Church is not the ground of all being, the unmoved mover, or the water that covers the depths of the ocean. It is a church, part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church that is grounded in Christ through the waters of baptism. To confuse the Roman church with anything more primary is to wander into idolatry of a ponderous sort. It also takes very little account of the history that has produced our current world of denominations. Why is a theologian as gifted as Prof. Reno willing to be so naïve on these points?

Prof. Reno digs himself an even deeper hole when he says that this *mater ecclesia* or ocean "needs no justification. . . . The Catholic Church needs no theories. She is the mother of theologies; she does not need to be propped up by theologies. . . . She is a given, a primary

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

substance within the economy of denominationalism."

This just doesn't cut it. *Mater ecclesia* is obviously and substantially broader than the Roman Catholic communion. If *mater ecclesia* needs neither reasons nor theories, then certainly entrance into a variety of denominations (not to mention Eastern Orthodoxy) is reasonable and secure, because it is Christ who is the one foundation of the Church (1 Corinthians 3:1-23). To say that all denominations other than the Roman Catholic are in need of theories in order to stay put, while the Roman Catholic denomination "needs no theory," is to engage in romanticism of the worst sort.

I am tired of what I can only term "Newman *redivivus*." And I am tired of it for the same reason Reno is—modernity. Personal conversions to a new communion are always acts of the individual conscience. I was born into the LCA and became a member of the ELCA by merger. I have entered into full communion with other denominations by way of full communion agreements between churches.

At each point along the way, my being in communion with this or that body has been the result of actions of the church, not my own individual conscience and action. Note that Luther and other early reformers were excommunicated by the church. They did not leave individually.

I would find Prof. Reno's conversion honorable and compelling if he had entered into communion with Rome together with his Anglican brothers and sisters. As it stands, I believe his conversion is more the result of modernist theory and romantic idolatry. Thanks for sharing, Prof. Reno, but the ruins are still there whether you bury your head in the ocean or not.

(The Rev.) Clint Schnekloth
East Koshkonong
Lutheran Church
Cambridge, Wisconsin

I was impressed by R.R. Reno's account of his move from Canterbury to Rome. It is a move I often think about myself, and for the same reasons. I was saddened, however, by Professor Reno's denigration of his former allegiance, in which he called the Episcopal Church "a smugly self-satisfied member of the liberal Protestant Club." It could be argued that Roman Catholicism is simply a more splendid ruin than Anglicanism.

Prof. Reno's account of his conversion rings true in those areas where he concentrated on the workings of his own soul in the light of St. Augustine's journey. He is honest about the irritants of Anglicanism: "The most innocuous little divergences from the Prayer Book made me angry." But the way the Roman Mass is celebrated in many places might irritate him, too.

Prof. Reno's account was culpably naïve in its ahistorical understanding of Roman Catholicism. His reading of Augustine is skewed by his dismissal of the place of longing in our relation with God. To be sure, our longing is turned on its head with the good news that God longs for us, but Augustine and Dante had to go on a long and apparently "fruitless" journey to find that out. It was hard to see how this related to Prof. Reno's floating, at last, to Rome. And why heap contempt on seekers just because he's found his safe harbor? Prof. Reno writes, "When church becomes a choice, will we not guide ourselves to our own self-destruction?" Maybe so, but the reverse is also true. Prof. Reno's is an idealistic picture of the Catholic Church, and while he despises the dabblers in religion, he may find that his own dabbling days aren't over.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church is in as much disarray as any other denomination. The appeal to Newman is a double-edged sword. Prof. Reno's reference to Newman made me realize for the first time that Kingsley had a point: Idealism does lead to a special kind of dishonesty. (Prof. Reno repeats the error, made more than once in FIRST THINGS, that Bishop Gene Robinson divorced his wife to live with his male lover. He did no such thing.) Newman's critique of liberalism and his insistence on the centrality of dogma are compelling, and I agree with Prof. Reno in his distress about the indifference to apostolic tradition and constraint. But then, I know no safe harbor from history. Apostolic Christianity is just as much of an *idea* or *theory* as Modern Christianity. "The faith once delivered to the saints" is an illusion.

The monk who most influenced me said, "Only God is Catholic. The Catholic Church hasn't happened yet." The idealist in all of us wishes it were otherwise. Prof. Reno writes, "The Catholic Church needs no theories." He is right. But the *Roman* Catholic Church does.

Prof. Reno's was an honorable and honest move. It was good to get out and it must be good to be home. I hope that, in five years or so, he will write a progress report. Perhaps, like Newman after 1870, he will find himself in a different place? As for me, for the time being, I remain a Catholic Christian and am grateful for the hospitality that many Roman Catholics afford me. I know that I am in the same Church with my Catholic friends and colleagues. Perhaps I will end up in my retirement a *de facto* Roman Catholic layman if there's a Benedictine monastery close at hand that will welcome me. George Tyrrell wrote something like, "If the Roman Catholic Church flounders, the other churches may as well order their coffins." May she one day be truly Catholic.

Alan Jones
Dean of Grace Cathedral
San Francisco, California

R.R. Reno replies:

Ching Yim is not the only reader to point out the less than entirely cheerful tone of my story of reception into

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Catholic Church. One friend, who worries that I am a postmodern fellow traveler fat with irony, commented that the essay should have been titled "Catholicism by Default." Here I must plead both innocence and guilt. I left the Episcopal Church when I finally faced up to my own spiritual mediocrity, so cleverly disguised as a neo-Jansenist pose against an Anglo-Catholic background. I believe that I truly saw my situation "in full daylight," and when I did, I turned to the Catholic Church as one rushing to the emergency room, not as one coolly reasoning to a logical conclusion. It is natural that the balance of such a story should focus on the pale and grey details of my difficulties, but I do hope readers recognize that a sick man is very joyful when he receives (to quote T.S. Eliot) "the sharp compassion of the healer's art."

Perhaps the apology's atmosphere of "midwinter spring" and its "frigid purgatorial fires" (Eliot again) stems from my sympathy with Pastor Schnekloth's accusation that I remain in the grips of modernist theory and romantic idolatry. I am after all an American, and short of radical reprogramming, I am sure to feel the Emersonian undertow all my life. But however much I might be tempted, do I really *need* a "theory" of the Catholic Church? Pastor Schnekloth insists that "Rome is no more the 'one church' than any other church," and he calls me "naïve and idolatrous" for claiming that the Catholic Church is the primary substance of Western Christianity.

I would have thought my claim factual and historical rather than theoretical and romantic. I do not know why Pastor Schnekloth feels the need to insist the Catholic Church is a denomination and I an idolater. He was born into the LCA and ordained into its ministry. These seem compelling reasons for remaining Lutheran. Add to that a commitment to serve as a pastor who wishes to return Lutheranism to communion with Rome, and I find myself concluding he is wise to stay with his ministry. I can only think that the modern Lutheran translation of the doctrine of justification into an epistemological principle explains Pastor Schnekloth's ire. To treat any human institution (such as the Catholic Church) as capable of the infinite (such as the People of God) was, for Paul Tillich, a violation of the Protestant principle. Violating this principle is entailed in the pledge I made upon reception into the Catholic Church, and so the Protestant principle judges me an idolater. Thus do modern theories of Protestantism keep the anathemas of the Reformation alive. Here I must cite Eliot yet again, this time as a warning: "Last season's fruit is eaten."

As I look back on fifteen years of adult participation as a lay leader in the Episcopal Church, I cannot count the number of times I went down the rabbit hole at meetings dominated by the likes of Dean Jones. His letter is a collection of false assertions, distortions, innuendos, contradictions, and misreadings. It could not be argued, as Jones suggests, that Catholicism is simply a more splendid ruin than the Episcopal Church. In the Episcopal Church it is now an accepted practice to invite the unbaptized to receive communion. This is 9.0 on the Richter scale when it comes to sacramental convulsions.

It is a distortion to say that I heap contempt upon seekers, but I would condemn clerical savants who contemplate switching denominations upon retirement with the same cold dispassion as orthopedic surgeons who muse about taking a good second wife. It is a fallacy to suggest that because the Catholic Church has not fully realized her identity as the People of God she is not "truly Catholic." It is a contradiction to praise my move as honorable and honest while calling me a culpably naïve, ahistorical, dishonest idealist.

But most of all, Dean Jones exhibits the smug self-satisfaction that he wishes I would not point out in the leadership of the Episcopal Church. Here we have a man who finds Newman's criticisms of theological liberalism compelling and who agrees with my distress about the Episcopal Church's indifference to the apostolic tradition—and who, not three sentences later, pronounces that very apostolic tradition an illusion. But worry not, for Dean Jones deems himself a "Catholic Christian." Some of his best friends are Catholics, apparently of the Roman variety, and he looks forward to being welcomed into a Benedictine monastery. What does all this add up to? Dean Jones' letter reflects the spiritual corruption of the Episcopal Church. It is, to appeal to T.S. Eliot a final time, "filled with fancies and empty of meaning / Tumid apathy with no concentration."

Islamic Liberty

I much appreciated Lawrence Uzzell's review of Michael Novak's *The Universal Hunger for Liberty: Why the Clash of Civilizations is Not Inevitable* (February). I share Uzzell's concerns that Novak is "so naïvely optimistic" as to be dangerous. While Mr. Novak's "yearning" to reach out to Muslims is understandable, on a political level Christians have much more in common with modern secularists than with followers of Islam.

The modern secularist and the Christian natural law theorist agree that the moral legitimacy of the state is in providing the basic goods that a state should provide. With the possible exception of Calvin's Geneva, there was never a full Christian theocracy. Indeed, the very purpose of FIRST THINGS is to argue that there need not be such a theocracy.

Compare the distortion of natural law within secularism to the complete absence of natural law in Islam. To a faithful Muslim, a state which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fails to enact *sharia* is illegitimate, because the only law is the revealed will of Allah. If our Western experience with Christianity is any indication, traditional Islam will continue to draw adherents, while revisionist Islam will become flaccid. We who live in freedom in the West—secularist, Christian, and Jew—will then have to consider what our options are, besides converting to Islam.

John Martino
Fellowship of Catholic
University Students
Fairfax, Virginia

Lawrence Uzzell replies:
I am most grateful to Mr. Martino for his generous words, but I fear that he may be in danger of falling into the opposite extreme from Novak's. We simply don't know how Islamic culture will evolve; it will probably not be along paths that we project from our own experience, such as European secularization or American revivalism. Most likely we shall see different paths in different countries: Indonesia need not mirror Morocco any more than Finland does Texas. The practice of full-scale theocracy in countries such as Iran has already helped discredit it among the Muslims themselves. Excessive pessimism about Islam can lead to the same outcome as excessive optimism: Wilsonian warmongering, which ends up inflaming extremism.

Jews and Jesus

In attempting to unravel the muddle David Klinghoffer presents in the Jewish reaction to Jesus Christ (February), Richard John Neuhaus creates some muddle of his own.

It is not erroneous, as he claims, to believe that the Gospels reflect a Pauline theologizing of the original Jesus message. Paul himself fought against the mainstream Jerusalem church that reflected most accurately what Jesus had taught, and the Gospels ignore completely the Jewish-Christians who were on their way toward being regarded as heretics. Paul's Christianity was earlier than that of the Gospels but not necessarily more historical. It makes one laugh and cry at the same time to reflect on the fact that, for many Jews like Mr. Klinghoffer, Paul of Tarsus is too Hellenistic, while for Houston Stewart Chamberlain and the Nazis the "rabbi" Paul was too Jewish.

Fr. Neuhaus deserves credit for observing what few have, that many Jews must have become Christians in the first several centuries A.D., otherwise what happened to the millions of Jews in the days of Josephus? He also is right in regarding Christianity and Talmudic Judaism as two versions of pre-70 A.D. Judaism. The best authority here is Donald Harmon Akensen's two books *Surpassing Wonder* and *St. Saul.*

But of course the real question, not addressed either by Mr. Klinghoffer or Fr. Neuhaus, is whether the Gospels can be considered anything more authoritative than Hellenized Jewish novels.

Norman Ravitch
Savannah, Georgia

Richard John Neuhaus' generally helpful review of David Klinghoffer's *Why the Jews Rejected Jesus* seems to reflect some of the same circular thinking that he rightly criticizes. The review employs the oddly redundant phrase "Messianic Christians," apparently to describe Jews who believe in Jesus. Does this mean Father Neuhaus agrees with Mr. Klinghoffer "that Jews reject Jesus because they are already Jews, and the mark of being a Jew is that one rejects Jesus"? Many Jews who believe in Jesus call themselves Messianic Jews, but Fr. Neuhaus seems to avoid that term because of circular thinking: As soon as one accepts Jesus he is no longer a Jew of any description because Jews don't accept Jesus.

But the Jesus movement that eventually became the Church evolved out of the same early Jewish matrix as did rabbinic Judaism. Thoughtful Christians are recognizing that the messiahship of Jesus does not necessitate a rejection of all things Jewish. Indeed, the original Jesus movement was entirely Jewish in demographics and outlook. Messianic Jews invoke this early Jesus movement as the model for our community. We seek a new, positive relationship between Judaism and Christianity by providing a living bridge between both.

"Messianic Christian" is a circular phrase, just as considering a person's Jewishness to be automatically nullified by faith in Jesus is circular thinking. One may disagree with the convictions of Messianic Jews, but one cannot win the argument simply by re-labeling us.

Russell Resnik
Executive Director
Union of Messianic
Jewish Congregations
Albuquerque, New Mexico

RJN replies:
Jews who accept Jesus as the Messiah while insisting that they are Jews have used various terms to describe themselves. Mr. Resnik is reading entirely too much into the nomenclature I employed. I am sympathetic to the argument of Rabbi Michael Wyschogrod in *Abraham's Promise*: Once a Jew, always a Jew.

Defending the Bishops

As a devoted reader of FIRST THINGS, I am aware that you have been critical of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on numerous occasions. Such criticism can be beneficial, but in the February issue this criticism went beyond what is helpful.

Among the many points I could cite, I will emphasize four. First, the description of the election of Bishop William S. Skylstad as president of the Conference is seriously uninformed. Bishop Skylstad has been active in the Conference for over

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

twenty-five years. His election as both vice president and president resulted from the bishops' first-hand knowledge of his abilities and dedicated service to the Conference. Cardinal Francis George took the time to acknowledge this dedication from the podium shortly after Bishop Skylstad's election.

I am also surprised that FIRST THINGS would imitate the secular press by relying on innuendo instead of facts. The unfounded implication that Bishop Skylstad was irresponsible, if not worse, in governing his diocese is unworthy of FIRST THINGS.

So, too, is the claim that Cardinal Theodore McCarrick was less than straightforward at the bishops' June 2004 meeting about principles for worthy reception of Holy Communion sent to him by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. One would think that this canard had been dispelled by the subsequent letter from Cardinal Ratzinger affirming that the statement drafted by the task force chaired by Cardinal McCarrick and adopted by the bishops is very much in harmony with these principles.

I am troubled as well by the use of the phrase "John Paul II bishops," with its implication that there are bishops in the Conference who are not faithful to the Holy Father. Since most of the bishops in the conference were appointed by this pope or received subsequent appointments from him, this claim amounts to a criticism of John Paul II himself, passing judgment on the pope's ability to discern who should be made bishop.

Edwin F. O'Brien
Archbishop for the Military Services
Washington, D.C.

Social Justice in Sodom

Richard John Neuhaus states (While We're At It, February) that we cannot tell what God thinks about health care in America. It is interesting that Father Neuhaus references God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah earlier in this piece, because Ezekiel 16:46-51 specifically states that the sin of Sodom that lead to their judgment was ignoring the poor.

Fr. Neuhaus' comments were in response to the call of Robert Edgar, head of the National Council of Churches, to include health care coverage (among other things) in the "moral values" discussion. While Fr. Neuhaus and I would both disagree with Mr. Edgar's proposals on this issue, it is absolutely in keeping with Biblical teaching on society and "a religiously informed public philosophy" to include health care coverage in discussions of moral values. My concern is that Fr. Neuhaus seems to be dismissing the discussion, instead of advancing an alternate solution. In the Bible I find far more commentary on how to treat the poor than I do on homosexuality. Why, then, do conservative Christians often ignore the former while focusing so heavily on the latter? A meaningful public debate on moral values needs to cover all of the issues, not just a select few.

Tyson Wright
Sacramento, California

Correcting a Correction

Father Neuhaus had it right the first time! It was definitely Dublin—my native city— that had a Jewish mayor called Briscoe, not Cork. Your correspondent is confusing Mr. Briscoe, elected in 1951, with Gerald Goldberg, who became mayor of Cork in 1977. It is sad to reflect that we are unlikely to have a Jewish mayor in any Irish city again; there are almost no Irish Jews left because of emigration to the UK and Israel.

Eamonn Gaines
Blackrock, Ireland

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opinion

When East is West

Peter J. Leithart

In an epilogue to his 1998 book, *Awakening the Buddha Within*, Lama Surya Das, a popular American Buddhist writer and lecturer, surveyed the current state of "Western Buddhism" and identified "ten emerging trends." They make for curious reading. Western Buddhists are more "lay-oriented" than traditional Buddhists, although they allow "room for traditional monasticism." Western Buddhists support "women as well as men in teaching and leadership roles" and believe the "ideal" of "gender equality" is "reachable." Western Buddhism lacks "the complex, esoteric rites and arcane rituals" of traditional Buddhism, emphasizing "essence more than form." More and more, Western Buddhists recognize "the benefits of nonsectarianism, ecumenicism, and cross-fertilization," now that they find themselves in the "great melting pot" of "American karma."

Most revealing, however, may be Surya Das' observation that "the Dharma is very suited to a Western way of life." Indeed. Buddhism is flourishing in America and in Western Europe. But the Buddhism that's booming is what Boston University's Stephen Prothero calls "Boomer Buddhism." Promoted by Surya Das, Jack Kornfield, and famous Hollywood converts such as Richard Gere, the "new Buddhists" practice an egalitarian, feminist, tolerant, ecumenical Buddhism that doesn't have to bother with religious tradition. Stephen Batchelor is perhaps the most radical of the new Buddhists: he advocates a hyper-Puritan "Buddhism Without Beliefs" that eliminates priests, rituals, icons, and various devotional practices. Others promote Buddhism as a mechanism for achieving typically American goals of success, money, and great sex. George Santayana, who had a bust of the Buddha on his mantle next to the bust of Kant, would not be surprised: "American life is a powerful solvent," he wrote. "It seems to neutralize every intellectual element, however tough and alien it may be, and to fuse it in the native goodwill, complacency, thoughtlessness, and optimism."

Not surprisingly, traditional Buddhists are reacting with horror. Responding to Surya Das' trend-watching, Ngakpa Traktung Yeshe Dorje and A'dzom Rinpoche charge that Surya Das' true agenda is revealed in his 2000 follow-up book, *Awakening to the Sacred*, where he "encourages each spiritual seeker to make up his or her own religion from scratch." They see American Buddhism as the agenda of "a small coterie of passé academics" who want to promote "egalitarianism and collectivism in a reworked, renamed 'post-modern' vehicle—Western Buddhism."

They're right, of course: Buddhism in the West is clearly being Americanized and commercialized. But the complicating wrinkle is that Buddhism has been remade by Yankee imperialists before. To this day, schoolchildren in Sri Lanka learn about the "doctrine" of Theravada Buddhism from a *Buddhist Catechism* first published in English and Sinhalese in 1881—a book described by its author as an "antidote to Christianity" and as a bulwark against Christian missionaries invading the East. Before they finish learning the *Catechism*, Sinhalese schoolchildren have been instructed in the evils of slavery and the virtues of "temperance, . . . gun control, chastity, and women's rights."

In its catechetical form, apologetic content, moralistic tone, and anti-ritual polemicism, the *Buddhist Catechism* suspiciously echoes nineteenth-century Protestant polemics against Roman Catholicism. And that the *Catechism* inculcates a sort of liberal Protestant Buddhism is no accident, for its author was an American-born convert, a lapsed Presbyterian reformer, journalist, and spiritualist named Henry Steel Olcott. Born in 1832 into a Presbyterian family in Orange, New Jersey, Olcott became a convinced "convert to spiritualism" at the age of twenty. But the real turning point in his life came in 1874, when he met the Russian émigré Madame Blavatsky, founder of Theosophy, while investigating reports of spiritualist phenomena at the Eddy Farmstead in Vermont for the *New York Daily Graphic*.

The two became "chums," as Olcott described it, and the ex-Presbyterian quickly determined that the various spiritualisms roiling around in the West needed to be reformed. Indeed, Olcott saw Blavatsky's Theosophy as a mechanism for reforming and rationalizing spiritualism, and the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 with Olcott as president and Blavatsky as corresponding secretary.

By the late 1880s, Olcott had defined the mission of the Theosophical Society to include the importation of Buddhism and Hinduism into the United States. He saw himself as a matchmaker who could wed the "masculine" technological superiority of the West with the "feminine" spirituality of the East. Perhaps the continuous defining theme of Theosophy, however, was the unity of all religions, which issued in a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

demand for tolerance and respect for all religions. As Olcott expressed it in one letter, "We should respect every man's faith." He was attracted to Buddhism precisely for its supposed tolerance, which he believed stood in strong contrast to the strict and doctrinaire Calvinism of his own ancestors.

Olcott and Blavatsky decided to visit Asia in order to pursue perceived links between Theosophy and Asian religions. Once there, despite his earlier professions of ignorance, he rapidly turned reformer, describing his arrival in Asia as an inverted Puritan mission: "Just as I have left my home, and business, and friends, to come to India to worship the *Parabrahm* of primitive religions, so, in 1635, one of my ancestors left his home in England to seek in the wilderness of America that freedom to worship the Jewish Jehovah which he could not have at home." They arrived in India in 1878, declaring themselves Hindus, and two years later visited Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka), where they became the first Western converts to Buddhism.

Ceylon was to prove fertile ground for Olcott's "errand into the wilderness," and he used his work in Ceylon as a base for launching the larger project of unifying Buddhists throughout Asia. Before Olcott arrived in Ceylon, Christian missionaries had achieved considerable success in Christianizing the island, particularly in its educational system. Buddhist monks had already begun resisting the missionaries, yet Olcott's influence was decisive. Believing the Ceylonese were appallingly ignorant of their true religious heritage—and that this ignorance made them vulnerable to Christian missionaries—he embarked on a program to consolidate Sri Lankan Buddhism, becoming one of the most important anti-mission missionaries in modern history. He provided instruction and inspiration for Dharmapala, the "Homeless Protector of the Dharma," who traveled to Japan, India, Burma, Thailand, Europe, and the United States, becoming what one history calls "the founder of international Buddhism."

Olcott also brought with him to Ceylon Yankee ingenuity and organizational skills. Taking a page from itinerant revivalists, he traveled the country on lecture tours, organizing schools and voluntary associations. He designed a Buddhist flag that eventually became the emblem of international Buddhism, talked the government into making Vesak a public holiday, and tried to get Buddhists to celebrate the day with songs modeled on Christmas carols. "It was clearly Olcott's inspiration," one history reports, "that led to the founding of the Young Men's and Young Women's Buddhist Associations and the Buddhist Sunday schools, which came to be held in almost every village and were supplied with textbooks and an examination structure by the Young Men's Buddhist Association."

Not only organizationally, but also conceptually, Olcott's work was less a revival than a reshaping of traditional Buddhism according to a liberal Protestant model. He attacked the Buddhist practice of veneration and made the distinctly Western claim that the essence of Buddhism did not lie in the rituals of the Buddhist monks but in the philosophy and texts of Buddhism, a kind of "sacred Scripture." No one before had conceived of summarizing all of Buddhism in a single volume, much less in a set of propositions, but Olcott produced both the *Buddhist Catechism* and a compilation of "Fundamental Buddhistic Beliefs," summarized in a fourteen-point Buddhist Platform by which he hoped to unify all Buddhist teaching. "His Buddha," Prothero notes, "was a quintessential Christian gentleman: sweet and convincing, the very personification of 'self-culture and universal love.'"

The ironies of this story run in many directions. Westerners who convert to Buddhism are frequently attracted to a form of Buddhism that is the creation of the modern world. Western converts are often attracted to precisely those features of Buddhism that owe most to liberal Protestantism: tolerance, elevation of reason, compatibility with science, hostility to elitism and hierarchy in religion, and so on.

For Christian churches, the ironies are more sobering. American Protestantism produced a leading opponent of Christian missions, who deployed the methods of evangelicalism and the concepts of liberal Protestantism in his battle against the spread of the gospel in Asia. The more-or-less unified Buddhism that Christianity today confronts in Asia is, in some measure, a product of Christianity itself. Eager missionaries enter Asia prepared to do battle with ancient Asian religions; they find themselves rehashing old fights with theological modernism. We have met the enemy, and he is us.

But there is a further irony for Buddhism as well. While some Buddhists scornfully battle their Boomer rivals, they might well forget the contribution that the West, and American Protestantism in particular, made to their own "traditional" religious outlook. Boomer Buddhism presents a distorted East to the West, but it is equally true that the East presents a distorted image to itself. East and West met long ago, and it is difficult to know where the one begins and the other ends.

Peter J. Leithart is Senior Fellow of Theology and Literature at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho, and pastor of Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gardens of Good and Evil

Rodney Delasanta

If you are old enough to have taken a Western Civilization course when it was still a staple of the cirriculum, one of the first items that confronted you in the freshman syllabus was the familiar story of the Garden of Eden from Genesis. You saw it again at the summit of Dante's *Purgatorio* and later in Book IV of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Whatever your personal reactions to the story of the garden, it was intended on the literary and theological levels to be a mysterious archetype of *gift* and *loss*: a paradise given to the highest of God's creatures, man and woman, which they lost because of their rebellion. The garden story constitutes the first chapter in the grand narrative of the human race, a narrative that necessarily involves us all, believers and unbelievers alike. This story has been told again and again, with variations on its theme.

Each generation has been compelled to consider what the archetypal loss of the garden means in its own time. The garden of the Genesis story clearly made inconvenient demands upon its residents. It was the work of a Gardener who was superior to the creatures that lived within it and could command them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So let us have the garden, some later generations came to think—but this time without the by-laws that came with it the first time. Other generations asked instead why the garden had to be *created* at all: Why couldn't it always have been there? Still others asked, Why can't we create our own gardens?

None of these responses is unreasonable. Because we are beings of sense before we are beings of reason, perhaps our garden should begin by satisfying all our sensual desires—and to accommodate that wish, some commentators have invented a garden quite at odds with prelapsarian Eden: the Garden of Earthly Delights, such as we find in some of the tales told by Ovid, Boccaccio, Geoffrey Chaucer's pilgrims, and Rabelais (to say nothing of the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch). Is this not, in fact, the way most of us wish to live our lives: in morally uncomplicated gardens of earthly delight? Is it ignoble to agree with Epicurus, the Greek philosopher, who taught in his Athenian garden that pleasure is the highest good and pain the worst evil?

But second thoughts intrude. To follow Epicurus we would have to deny the spirit, and when we deny spirit we reduce life entirely to the material—which forces us to admit that death is final. At that point we are shaken by Hamlet's question when he considered the finality of his own life: "To die, to sleep, no more." Hamlet, too, had second thoughts: "To sleep? perchance to dream. Ay there's the rub; / for in that sleep of death what dreams may come, / when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, / must give us pause." What we find when we examine the promises of the Epicurean garden is not a particularly consoling or satisfying story. Embrace Epicurus, deny spirit, allow twenty centuries of stony sleep to bring his materialist doctrine to a head, and you may wake up to find yourself in the garden of the Playboy mansion, a garden where the approach of death pollutes every pleasure with a sense of desperation.

There are other gardens to consider. One of the most compelling in a time of moral exhaustion like ours is the garden with which Voltaire ended *Candide*. Candide, the incorrigible optimist, is separated by war from his beloved Cunegonde. His attempts to recover her take him to three continents where he is visited by unbelievable suffering. Wherever he goes, he finds a world that is thoroughly corrupt and irredeemable, the very opposite of what his philosophical mentor, Pangloss, had described as "the best of all possible worlds." By the end of his futile journeys, the only sane option left to Candide is to retreat from the world. With a few friends and a retrieved Cunegonde, who is now old and ugly, Candide leads his little group away from the multiple betrayals of Christendom to Constantinople. There he tries to start over by heeding the advice of a Muslim holy man, who informs him that the three great evils are boredom, vice, and poverty. This is the highest wisdom that Voltaire's Enlightenment can offer: *Il faut cultiver notre jardin*—"It is necessary to cultivate our own garden."

This is not the garden of earthly delights, not the enchanted garden, but the garden of resignation, of suffering unfulfilled, the garden of disenchantment. It is a signal that the world, which is too much with us, has finally defeated us. Although monasticism also represented a retreat from the world, its motto, *ora et labora* ("pray and work"), taught that to pray and work is to pray and work for the world and its redemption. In Candide's garden, we must work not in contemplation or prayer but in order to distract ourselves from the boredom, poverty, and vice of the world. Work as distraction—that is the *summa* of Voltaire's wisdom.

The garden of the postmodernists—the post-Enlightenment garden—is captured in Jorge Luis Borges' seminal story "The Garden of Forking Paths." This is certainly not Eden, nor an epicurean garden of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

earthly delights, nor a Voltairean garden of resignation, but a contemporary garden of ambiguity, of epistemological indeterminism and moral relativism. When the Chinese narrator-spy arrives at the house of the English sinologist whom he intends to kill, he discovers in his host's garden that the central symbol of all knowledge and literature is the labyrinth. All the paths of this garden fork—one leading to another and that to still another, *ad infinitum*.

This postmodern labyrinth has no exit and claims no final answers because its forks divide and divide again into infinity. By contrast, the labyrinth of classical myth had surrendered to the ingenuity of human intellect. Remember Theseus, who enters the labyrinth of Crete and kills the minotaur imprisoned there, but who would himself have been imprisoned by the labyrinth had Ariadne not given him the thread by which he is able to retrace his steps to the entrance. Whereas the classical story dramatizes Greek confidence in the ability of the human intellect to resolve the dead ends of the labyrinth, the postmodern mind has given up on any such claim. No human intellect can negotiate the labyrinth—so wander along, says Borges, and enjoy the forking paths.

This garden of postmodernism has its allure, but perhaps we should contrast it with another garden you may remember from your old Western Civilization course: the Garden of Gesthemane. Here Christ's passion begins. Here he sweats blood and prays that mysterious prayer: "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). And while Christ agonizes, his disciples remain fast asleep. Disappointed at their frailty, he asks them, "Could you not have watched and waited an hour with me?" What follows is worse than frailty: it is betrayal by a man whom Jesus had chosen as one of his closest disciples. The grand narrative that began with gift and loss in Eden seems to have come full circle to a futile agony in still another failed garden.

But there remains one final garden that demands our attention. "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden there was a new tomb where no one had ever been laid" (John 19:41). All four gospels mention Mary Magdalene and other women going to the tomb early in the morning to anoint the body of Jesus, but John's account specifically alludes to her discovering the empty tomb alone and her running to tell Simon Peter and the other disciple that the body of Jesus had been taken away. The two men run to the tomb, find it empty, with the shroud and head cloth lying there separately, and, astonished, they return to their dwelling.

But Mary Magdalene does not leave; she remains there—weeping. The weeping Magdalene has become an icon of Western art, of course; the image has even penetrated our language with the corruption of the name Magdalene into our word "maudlin." But then "she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not recognize him. Thinking that he was the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him off tell me where you put him.' . . . Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, '*Rabboni*'" (John 20:14-16).

Thinking that he was the gardener—as, indeed, he was, regaining by his death and resurrection the Garden of Eden for a humanity that had foolishly lost it. One remembers other redemptive gardens: Augustine's in Milan, for instance, or Kierkegaard's in Copenhagen. But the great story that puts the Garden of Eden at the beginning and the Garden of the Resurrection at the end—that is the grand narrative of Western civilization, its alpha and omega.

Rodney Delasanta is Professor of English at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island.

The Legal Death of Terri Schiavo

Robert T. Miller

Despite all the public outrage at the horror of an innocent woman being starved to death, despite the desperate and pathetic pleas of her parents, despite even a special act of Congress requiring the federal courts to intervene, those courts have let stand an order that Terri Schiavo die—or so many usually informed commentators have said. Once again, judges have ignored the plain meaning of democratically enacted laws in order to enforce their own moral values—or so we have been told.

Unfortunately, it isn't true. The simple fact is that Terri Schiavo's legal rights were never once violated. The result in the case was so unjust not because the courts ignored the law but because they followed it. The laws of Florida, like those of most states, specifically allow that, in cases like Schiavo's, some people may decide that others ought to die.

The special act that Congress passed for Terri Schiavo gave the federal courts jurisdiction over suits concerning her rights "under the Constitution or laws of the United States relating to the withholding or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

withdrawal of food, fluids, or medical treatment necessary to sustain her life." Any claim in the federal litigation thus had to relate to an alleged violation of some federal right—and, in fact, all the claims Schiavo's parents raised were of this kind. Congress could do no more for Schiavo because, under Article III of the Constitution, federal courts may adjudicate only certain enumerated kinds of claims, and federal questions of the kind mentioned in the act were the only ones remotely relevant. (This shows, incidentally, the falsity of the charge that the act violated principles of federalism.)

In bringing suit under the special act, Schiavo's parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, were petitioning the district court for a preliminary injunction ordering that Schiavo's feeding tube be restored pending the litigation. The requirements for such injunctions are clear, and they include that the petitioner show "a substantial likelihood of success on the merits." In a case like Schiavo's, in which the harm to be prevented by the injunction is especially great, this standard is lowered somewhat, so that the party requesting the injunction need show only a "substantial case on the merits."

For the court to have issued the requested injunction, therefore, Schiavo's parents had to make out at least a substantial case that one or more of her rights under either the federal Constitution or a federal statute had been violated. The best potential arguments concerned Schiavo's rights under the Fourteenth Amendment to various kinds of fair procedures in the state litigation, and so the chief claims in the federal litigation were procedural ones.

Schiavo's parents thus argued that Schiavo's right to a fair trial had been violated because, pursuant to Florida law, when a legal guardian (here, Schiavo's husband) and other family members (here, her parents) cannot agree as to whether an incapacitated person would want to continue life-sustaining measures, the guardian may petition the court to determine, after a hearing, what the incapacitated person's wishes were. The Schindlers argued that because one and the same individual—the presiding judge—acted both as judge and as the decision-maker ascertaining Schiavo's wishes, the procedure was unfair; the result was comparable to allowing a person to be the judge in his own case.

As a matter of law, this is clearly wrong. The judge was called on to make a finding of fact—"Would Schiavo have wanted to continue life-sustaining measures in her present condition?"—and making such findings is one of the functions of trial judges. The judge's performing this traditional and commonplace function surely did not make the trial unfair in any manner recognized under the federal Constitution.

The Schindlers also argued that the same Florida procedures violated Schiavo's equal-protection rights. The argument is obscure in the Schindlers' complaint, but the idea seems to have been that, since the Florida procedures deny incapacitated persons the right to a fair trial, such persons are being treated worse than other people. But this argument presupposes that the Florida procedures deny incapacitated persons a fair trial, and since that argument failed, this one had to fail as well.

The Schindlers next argued that Schiavo's rights to due process of law were violated when the Florida court failed to appoint a guardian *ad litem* for Schiavo, failed to appoint an independent attorney for Schiavo, and failed to grant Schiavo "access to court" by not conducting a face-to-face meeting with her, either in the courtroom or her hospice. None of these claims had any chance of succeeding. Florida courts had, in fact, appointed guardians *ad litem* for Schiavo three times. Moreover, such guardians are appointed to represent the interests of the incapacitated person in the particular litigation.

Given that the Schindlers themselves were parties to all the relevant litigation, it was hard for them to argue that the interests to be protected were not being fairly presented to the court. As to appointing an independent attorney, such an appointment is made if, among other things, making the appointment will likely decrease the risk of an erroneous determination being made in the case; appointing the attorney, in other words, has to be likely to make a difference to the outcome. The Schindlers were thus arguing that they and their attorneys were somehow unable to advance sufficiently their own legal arguments on Schiavo's behalf: If only Schiavo had one more lawyer, in other words, the result of the case might have been different.

Since the Schindlers have litigated for seven years—and even succeeded in having Congress pass the special act—this was implausible. As to the claim that the judge had a constitutional obligation to meet Schiavo face-to-face, this would amount to saying that, in any guardianship proceeding, the subject person must, as a matter of federal constitutional law, be physically present in the courtroom or else be visited by the judge wherever the person resides. There is nothing in the Constitution suggesting this.

In their last procedural claim, the Schindlers argued that, under the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Cruzan v. Missouri Department of Health*, a state court's decision authorizing the discontinuance of hydration and nutrition must be supported by clear and convincing evidence (a standard of proof

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

higher than that generally required in civil cases but lower than the reasonable-doubt standard of criminal cases). Although the Florida courts purported to rely on such evidence in determining that Schiavo would have desired the discontinuance of life-sustaining measures, the Schindlers argued that such evidentiary support had not been produced in Schiavo's case. *Cruzan*, however, does not say what the Schindlers claimed it does. The case held that a state's demanding clear and convincing evidence in such proceedings is permitted by the Fourteenth Amendment, not that it is required. Even if the Florida courts had relied on less than clear and convincing evidence in reaching their decisions, this would not have violated the holding in *Cruzan*.

In addition to these procedural claims, the Schindlers raised several claims based on Schiavo's substantive rights under federal law. In particular, they alleged violations of her free-exercise rights under the First Amendment, her substantive due process rights under the Fourteenth Amendment, and her rights to be free of cruel and unusual punishments under the Eighth Amendment; they also alleged violations of her rights under various federal statutes, including the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Person Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

None of these claims was remotely meritorious. All of the rights alleged to be violated are rights against actions by the government or its agents, not against private actions by private parties. In the Schiavo case, the removal of Schiavo's feeding tube was clearly private action because it was the action of her husband and guardian, not the action of the government or any of its agencies. True, the husband had obtained an order from a state court to enforce his will, but it is well-established in the law that private action does not become state action merely because such action is enforced by a court.

All of the Schindlers' claims were weak, and most were obviously inconsistent with settled law. Since, under the law, the district court could issue a preliminary injunction only if the Schindlers had made out a substantial case, the district court was right to deny the application, and the Eleventh Circuit was right to affirm that decision.

Some have argued that, since the special act provided that the district court "shall determine *de novo* any claim of a violation of any right of Theresa Marie Schiavo within the scope of this Act, notwithstanding any prior State court determination," the district court was required to issue the preliminary injunction and to hold a trial on the merits of the Schindlers' claims. This, too, is wrong. It conflates what the Schindlers had to show to obtain the preliminary injunction with the standard by which the court was to determine whether the Schindlers had shown this. In fact, the Schindlers applied for a preliminary injunction, and the district court determined *de novo* that they were not entitled to one. Similarly, blaming the federal courts for not inquiring into whether Schiavo is really in a persistent vegetative state misses the point: This issue was not relevant to any of the claims the Schindlers raised in federal court, and even the Schindlers, in their filings with the courts, never suggested otherwise.

In short, the courts followed the law precisely when they decided that none of Terri Schiavo's rights under the Constitution and laws of the United States had been violated. How then could the result be so unjust? The answer is perfectly simple: The substantive laws of Florida expressly authorize a murderous result. Those laws, like the laws of most states, expressly provide that a guardian may starve to death a ward in a persistent vegetative state, defined in Florida to mean "a permanent and irreversible condition of unconsciousness in which there is (a) the absence of voluntary action of any kind, [and] (b) an inability to communicate or interact purposefully with the environment." Substantively unjust laws, enforced in accordance with their terms and by due process of law, lead to substantively unjust results.

Laws authorizing a guardian to starve to death a ward are profoundly immoral, even as applied to those who would have wanted to die; we do not accommodate suicides. But in hundreds of cases around the country every year, such laws are enforced, and hundreds of people die like Terri Schiavo. The only extraordinary thing about the Schiavo case is that her parents have done everything in their power to prevent her death, with the result that Schiavo has received much more process and much more publicity than others to whom the same thing has happened. One commentator described the Schiavo case as the "crime of the century." In fact it is a banal, run-of-the-mill crime of a kind that happens every day in the United States.

And for this, we cannot blame the courts. The fault lies not in our judges but in ourselves, for we have created a society in which the law allows the strong and healthy to determine that some of the weak and infirm have lives not worth living and then to kill them.

Robert T. Miller will begin an appointment as assistant professor of law at the Villanova University School of Law this fall.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Living Life's End

Gilbert Meilaender

A good bit of public attention in recent years has been focused on developments at the beginning of life: new reproductive technologies, for instance, and research on embryos. But questions about what we ought to do for those near the end of life may be more enduring and are, at least by my lights, more puzzling.

My aim here is to think through a few of those puzzles—not so much to solve them as simply to seek increased clarity about where and why we are puzzled. To the degree that I have a thesis to assert, it is captured in the words of Edgar in *King Lear*: "Men must endure / Their going hence, even as their coming hither; / Ripeness is all."

Let us suppose that we can agree on the following points. (Not everyone will agree, of course, but the most fruitful clarifications and discussions often arise among those who already agree on a good bit. Moreover, these points of agreement have been—and, I think, in considerable measure still are—widely shared in our society.)

• We are not "vitalists," as that term is sometimes used. A vitalist thinks that preserving life (even, as it is sometimes put, "mere biological life") is always the most important human good—and, hence, that life must always be preserved if it can be, at whatever cost to other goods. If we thought this, we could not have a category of permissible "allowing to die."

• We come to our deliberations about end-of-life care with some principles in hand, but we also form judgments about particular cases. There are bound to be instances in which our principles suggest one course of action, while our sense of the particulars of the case inclines us in a different direction. In such instances neither the principles nor our response to the particulars always holds trump in moral reasoning. To be sure, some principles we would be reluctant to change: they are so fundamental to everything we believe that changing them would be akin to a conversion. Likewise, there are some cases about which we can hardly imagine changing our mind. But our deliberations always move back and forth between principle and particular response, and adjustment can take place on either pole.

• Among the principles we want to uphold but must explore in relation to cases is that we should never aim at or intend the death of any of our fellow human beings (recognizing possible exceptions in cases where they are themselves threatening the lives of others). A slightly different but related formulation would be that we want to affirm the equal dignity of every human being. Hence, we should not think of ourselves as possessors of another's life or judge that another's life is not worthy of our care. (We might add that there is nothing wrong with wishing, hoping, or desiring that a suffering person die; the wrong would lie in acting in a way aimed to bring about that person's death.)

• Committed to such a principle of equal respect, we are led quite naturally to a certain way of caring for others who are ill, suffering, or dying. On the one hand, we should not aim at their death (whether by action or omission). We shouldn't do whatever we do so that they will die. On the other hand, because we do not think that continued life is the only good, or necessarily the greatest good, in every circumstance, we are not obligated to do everything that might be done to keep someone alive. If a possible treatment seems useless or (even if useful) quite burdensome for the patient,

Gibert Meilaender *holds the Board of Directors Chair in Theological Ethics at Valparaiso University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we are under no obligation to try it or continue it. And in withholding or withdrawing such a treatment, we do not aim at death. We simply aim at another good: the good of life (even if a shorter life) free of the burdens of the proposed treatment. There is nothing terribly unusual about this. All of us, all the time, choose among various life courses open to us. When we are young, we may have many life choices available. The older we get, the more that range narrows. If we become severely ill, the range may be quite narrow. And if we are irretrievably dying, the narrowing process may have left almost no choices at all. Yet, all along the way, we choose a life from among this range of life choices. We may choose a life that is more daring and heroic (though shorter) than some other possibilities. That is not the same as choosing death. Likewise, one might imagine a severely ill patient deciding to forego a painful round of possibly useful treatment—choosing thereby a predictably shorter life, but a life free of the burdens of that treatment.

It is quite possible that we can agree on these points, yet not agree entirely on what is right to do in certain cases. Two sorts of cases, in particular, are baffling. There are patients who seem to be increasingly, or even entirely, beyond the reach of our care. The patient in a persistent vegetative state would be at the furthest boundary—still clearly a living human being, though seemingly unaware of any care we provide, but able to live indefinitely if given tube feedings. There are also patients to whom care might still be given but who are on a trajectory which can only worsen over time. An example (which I owe to Leon Kass) would be a patient with Alzheimer's disease who has a Stokes-Adams episode (in which a temporary loss of consciousness due to cardiac arrhythmia occurs). One might implant a pacemaker in such a patient, thereby preventing further such episodes, but thereby also making time for further stages of decline from the Alzheimer's.

These cases may baffle us, even against the background of agreement I sketched above. In the instance of the patient in a persistent vegetative state, we may—to put it crassly—wonder what the point is of feeding. In the case of the patient with Stokes-Adams syndrome we may wonder whether we should help them now, knowing that by making cardiac arrest less likely we thereby keep them alive for still greater deterioration from dementia.

We can take these two sorts of cases in order and think them through. With regard to a patient in a persistent vegetative state, what is the point of providing care that seems to make no difference to the one who receives it? This is a question any of us might ask ourselves. Rather than addressing it directly, I want to trace briefly some reflections—and a change of mind—that Paul Ramsey wrote of years ago. Writing before a clear distinction had been made between comatose and PVS patients, Ramsey discussed patients in what he called "deep and irreversible coma." We can simplify matters by taking his discussion to refer to PVS patients—which is, I think, more or less the sort of case he had in mind.

In 1970 Ramsey published *The Patient as Person.* Chapter three, titled "On (Only) Caring for the Dying," is one of the classic early pieces of bioethical writing in this country. Any reader of the chapter will see that (while he is aware of the possibility of "undertreatment") Ramsey's chief concern is "overtreatment." In the course of his discussion Ramsey argues that one basic imperative—"never abandon care"—should govern our treatment decisions. He recognizes that we could effectively abandon proper care for patients by aiming at their death (by action or omission) but also by providing treatments which for them are either useless or excessively burdensome. If we withdraw or withhold treatment, and do so properly, we are not abandoning care for the person; rather, we are caring in what is now the appropriate manner. So we should never aim at a patient's death, never treat him in a way intended to get him to go away, but we might well give care that provides for him a life free of the burdens of treatment, even if somewhat shorter than possible.

Having worked the argument to this point, Ramsey then considered (in the final section of chapter three) "two possible qualifications of our duty always to care for the dying." Of the first of these—patients who are "irretrievably inaccessible to human care"—Ramsey was not only asking whether it would be permissible to withdraw treatment from such patients. Because he was clear that one might aim at a patient's death by withholding treatment, the "qualification" he was exploring was whether taking action to kill the patient—to whom it no longer seems to make any difference—might be permissible.

In considering such an exception, Ramsey did not suppose that he was setting aside the principle never to abandon care. On the contrary, his point was that one might argue that care cannot be given to a person who is "beyond" receiving it. And he made the point specifically with reference to feeding:

> The proposed justifiable exception depends on the patient's physiological condition which may have placed him utterly beyond reach. If he feels no suffering, he would feel no hunger if nourishment is withheld. He may be alone, but he can feel no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> presence. If this is a true account of some comatose patients, then in this sort of case we have correctly located the point at which the crucial moral difference between omission and commission as a guide to faithful actions has utterly vanished. The condition of the patient renders it for him a matter of complete indifference whether humankind's final act toward him directly or indirectly allows death to come. He already is beyond our love and care.

Less than a decade later Ramsey returned to the question of possible qualifications of the duty never to abandon care. In his 1978 book *Ethics at the Edges of Life*, he took up again—though with greater care and precision—the question of possible exceptions. He more or less withdrew the earlier exceptions he had proposed, writing that he had ample reason to regret that he had not eliminated them from the manuscript of the earlier book.

Why the change of mind? A full account would draw us into a number of complexities, but a relatively simple answer is that he was no longer certain we can say with confidence when another living human being is beyond the reach of our care. Persuaded in considerable measure by objections Hans Jonas ("a person to me of exemplary moral wisdom") had raised, Ramsey drew back: "The serious objection to searching for such exceptions is that—even within the stringent limits of indications of a patient's impenetrable solitude silencing any need on our parts to feel an obligation to continue to extend care—one might still do the deadly deed to someone . . . who while beyond showing response to us may still be within reach of violation at our hands, and so not altogether in God's keeping."

That sentence ends a paragraph. The next paragraph begins: "But then the objectors shifted, and the objection changed . . . in support of outlooks in medical ethics I never thought of espousing." From Ramsey's attempt to see whether there were any exceptions to the principle which forbade abandoning care (because the agent could no longer give what could not be received), or from the view, "which was never in doubt," that it would be right to let die those who were clearly dying, others moved to a search for reasons for "letting patients die who are in fact not dying."

Which brings us back to the case of the patient in a persistent vegetative state. If at any point it seems the patient's body is shutting down, that he is going to die quite soon regardless of whether he is given high-caloric feedings, surely we can discontinue feeding without abandoning him or aiming at his death.

But suppose a different case, in which a patient might live for a decade if fed. Such a patient is certainly severely disabled, but it would be counterintuitive to call him a "dying" patient. He is not irretrievably dying, perhaps not even terminally ill. And if he is not dying, it will be difficult to characterize a decision to stop feeding as simply "letting" or "allowing" this person to die. As Ramsey wrote, try "withholding the *intention to cause* the death of a patient" when acting thus. (This makes feeding quite different from decisions about removing a respirator. One does not know for certain that a patient will be unable to breathe on his own, and, unless we intend to suffocate him if he does breathe successfully on his own, it is possible to remove the respirator while withholding an intention to bring about the person's death.)

We can, of course, readily understand why someone—any of us—might feel it was useless or made no sense to continue feeding such a person; yet, perhaps this is an impulse we should resist. As Hans Jonas put it, we should not "deny the extracerebral body its essential share in the identify of the person." Hence, the body of such a human being, which "still breathes, pulses, and functions otherwise, must still be considered a residual continuance of the subject that loved and was loved"—and for whom, therefore, we should never abandon care.

We might worry, of course, that we were now committed to any and all medical interventions which the patient in a persistent vegetative state might need in his continuing life. Would we provide all sorts of treatments, even quite invasive ones? And if not, why not? And if we would not provide various invasive treatments, does that mean we should rethink a decision to feed the patient?

The questions and permutations here become endless, of course, and many of them can scarcely be answered in advance. I would be reluctant to withhold antibiotics for treating a simple infection in such a patient, for it seems to me that I would withhold them only *so that* the patient would die. I'm also confident, however, that I would not think such a patient should have bypass surgery or have a leg amputated. Why the difference?

I think perhaps—trying, as we are, to articulate reasons for what amounts to an intuition—that more invasive treatments seem to make the patient a mere object. I realize, of course, that such persons may seem to be precisely that. Yet, I suspect that when we feed this patient we do not so much treat him as an object as try to honor the way in which his (seemingly now) "extracerebral body" retains "its essential share in the identity of the person." It would be harder to think that way when we amputated a leg. Moreover, we could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

withhold the more invasive interventions while simultaneously withholding an intention that the patient die. But it is hard to believe we could withhold feeding while simultaneously withholding the intention that the patient die.

We can, therefore—or, at least, I think we can—develop what it means never to abandon care of such patients without supposing that we are somehow committed to using every intervention made possible by medical advance. And surely we can do so while acknowledging our mortality.

But the fear that medical advance simply keeps us alive to suffer greater and longer deterioration is a strong one, and it is best discussed by turning to the second sort of case—in which intervening to benefit and preserve life means keeping a person alive for what may well be a long period of deterioration and a yet worse death.

Suppose a person suffering from dementia experiences a Stokes-Adams episode. Why would we not implant a pacemaker in order to prevent further episodes? Almost certainly we would provide a pacemaker if the person were not demented, so why exactly would the presence of dementia make us do otherwise?

One reason we might be tempted not to provide a pacemaker for a demented patient has to do with a certain revulsion some may feel for a life (in particular, our own life or that of a loved one) that has descended deeply into dementia. Even if that demented person is actually quite content, as might well be the case, we may still draw back in the presence or at the thought of that "extracerebral" still-living body. But if we experience such revulsion, we should struggle against it, however naturally it comes to us—for if we decide against the pacemaker when moved by such feelings, it becomes hard to deny that we are doing this *so that* the demented person will die.

One might reject that conclusion, however, or at least argue with it. The argument would go something like this: In withholding the pacemaker we are not aiming at this person's death. On the contrary, when all of us choose constantly from among the various lives available to us, we are choosing not only a life but also certain possible deaths. We are choosing among the various deaths open to us, making some far more likely than others—but this does not amount to aiming at or intending death. So we might decline the pacemaker for a demented loved one, choosing thereby a likely death from cardiac arrest rather than a death from other causes at the end of a long period of dementia.

This is a serious response, though I do not find it persuasive. Its flaw is that it is grounded less in a desire to benefit the life the patient has than to ask whether continued life would be a benefit. Or we could say that its flaw is that it seeks less to benefit the patient's life than to manage, shape, and orchestrate the time and circumstances of the patient's death. This gets the focus somewhat wrong. After all, the patient we have described with Stokes-Adams syndrome is not necessarily going to die at once if we decline the pacemaker for him. He may live on for some time, suffering occasional episodes, increasingly weak and listless. Hence, for as long as he lives on, our decision deprives him of benefits well within our power to provide without burdening him greatly. Thus, our desire to orchestrate the circumstances of death, to see that he dies from cardiac problems rather than as the end result of a decade of dementia, deflects our focus from helping him to live better for as long as he lives.

Moreover, the desire or attempt to manage and orchestrate the timing and circumstances of death may miss something important about what it means to be human and may, in fact, be poor preparation for death (our own or another's) when it does come. Death means, after all, the defeat of our desire to shape the circumstances of our life. Trying to orchestrate the circumstances of death has the look, therefore, of one last attempt to be what we are not—the author of the story of our life or the life of another.

We are driven back, in short, to one of the central truths about human nature, a truth that complicates matters time and again in bioethics. On the one hand, we fail to do justice to the freedom that characterizes our nature if we suppose that human beings should simply suffer death as the other animals do, untouched by human art. On the other hand, we fail to honor the finitude that (just as much as freedom) characterizes our nature if we try to avoid or escape the trajectory that bodily life takes. "Men must endure / Their going hence, even as their coming hither; / Ripeness is all." The same desire to honor and respect bodily life that inclines us to hesitate before the possibility of engineering the "coming hither" of the next generation should also incline us to hesitate to engineer our "going hence."

Euthanasia is the ultimate attempt at managing death (and misses the irony that we are attempting to master the very event that announces our lack of mastery). We are exploring now whether some treatment decisions approach too closely that same managerial attitude, whether they begin to choose death rather than life. Consider another sort of case: Suppose a diabetic and insulin-dependent person is told by his physician that he has a form of cancer which will almost surely kill him within two years. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is terminally ill, though hardly at this point irretrievably dying. We can suppose also that he accepts the broad moral contours I outlined at the beginning and would not, therefore, think it right to take a drug overdose now in order to avoid what lies ahead. But there is another possible route to such avoidance. He could simply stop taking his insulin, drift off into a diabetic coma, and in this manner orchestrate to some extent the manner of his "going hence."

Why not? Why not shape the circumstances of his dying in this way—seizing upon the fact of his insulin-dependence, just as one might seize upon the fact of a cardiac arrhythmia to avoid years of dementia? Why do we sense, as I certainly do, that giving up his insulin at this point would be choosing death rather than simply choosing a life shorter than some possible lives he might choose?

One thing we might note is that the range of his life choices, though narrowing, remains considerable at this point. He could still decide to run the risks of learning to parachute from an airplane. He could still travel across the country to see a grandchild. He could still go to Florida to watch baseball teams in spring training. Perhaps doing any of these things would sap his body's energy and result in a somewhat earlier death than would otherwise have occurred, but they would all be choices of life, not death. It is much harder, however, to describe a decision to dispense with his insulin as a choice of a certain kind of life. It would be hard to withhold the insulin at this point while (to use Ramsey's formulation) simultaneously withholding the intention to bring about death.

I can also imagine, however, that a time might come (say, twenty-two months later) when this same person goes into the hospital for what he, his family, and his doctors know will be the last time. No longer simply terminally ill, he is now irretrievably dying. The range of his life choices has narrowed greatly; indeed, it is almost nil. If now he makes decisions which shape or orchestrate his manner of dying, he does so in a context where he is not choosing or aiming at death—an intention that would, after all, suggest an absurdly inflated sense of the possibilities still open to him. I would think that deciding to say goodbye, to stop taking the insulin, and to drift off into a diabetic coma would no longer amount to aiming at or choosing death. He would be shaping—even, if we wish, engineering—the manner of his dying, but not in what seems an unacceptable way.

This is as far as I can press my own reflections on these matters, but the central question is, I hope, clear. Take any case of a person who no longer seems to have much of a life. (I put it this way to capture not how we ought to think but how we often feel.) And suppose this person may die somewhat sooner if not treated but may live an indefinite period of time, in this less-than-desirable condition, if treated. And suppose, finally, that the treatment itself is not painful, is not unusually costly, does not require great inconvenience for the person being treated, and is not so invasive as to seem to make of the person a mere object. The treatment will benefit the life he has, even though one might be tempted to say that it's not much of a benefit to have that life. If we withhold treatment in such a case, would we simply be shaping or orchestrating the manner of death in a morally acceptable way? Or would it be more accurate and honest to say that withholding treatment in these circumstances would be not merely shaping the manner of dying but choosing and aiming at death—withholding treatment in the hope that he will die as a result?

Whatever our uncertainties, and however precisely we respond to such cases, we need to do so in a way that attempts to hold on to the truth of our human condition. We should not want to think of ourselves as the author of the story of our own life or that of another—nor, therefore, as one who exercises ultimate authority over life. Indeed, when we think that way, or to the degree we think that way, we will almost certainly be unable to come to terms with the fact of death, and our attempt to deal with it is bound to be distorted. Some shaping and orchestrating of living and dying we all must do. But it is a true depiction of our humanity to say that "Men must endure / their going hence, even as their coming hither." As Gene Outka put it in a somewhat different context, with respect to every person whose life is given us to care for, we are "enjoined to honor from first to last the space he occupies and the time he has." FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Inconvenient Conscience

George Cardinal Pell

Part of the pleasure in reading John Henry Newman is the huge range of topics he covered and the variety of styles he brought to them. As well as the great philosophical and theological treatises, he left us sermons, essays, poems, letters—a vast treasury that makes anything like systematic exposition difficult.

Still, among the topics that regularly caught Newman's attention through the years, conscience ranks high. Nearly every theologian would agree with Newman that conscience is "a connecting principle between the creature and his Creator." But while some see conscience as God's invitation to embrace His law as free subjects, others see it as a radical call to personal freedom. Indeed, for many people today, the word "conscience" suggests not law at all, but the freedom to judge by our own personal resources and the right to act as we each think best—a rejection, in other words, of the need for morality and creed; a claim that I should be allowed to live as I choose.

Of course, this view is often dressed up with the claim that conscience is a special faculty that speaks to us, rather like an oracle, and it may even be elevated to the status of a doctrine: the "primacy of conscience." But however it is presented, it stands in contrast to the view that conscience is instead simply the mind thinking practically and morally. We think well when we understand moral principles and apply them in clear and reasonable ways; we think badly when we ignore or reinvent moral principles, or apply them in ambiguous and unreasonable ways. "Good conscience," in this way of understanding, means a good grasp and a good application of moral truth—for it is the truth that remains primary, the truth that is grasped and applied by the practical mind.

George Cardinal Pell *is the Archbishop of Sydney, Australia.*

John Henry Newman was well aware of this position, which represents the best of Catholic thinking on the topic (for instance, the thinking of St. Thomas Aquinas in *De Veritate*). Newman carefully distinguishes himself from those who equate conscience with integrity, sincerity, or preference. In a passage in the *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* (quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*), he writes: "Conscience is not a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself; but it is a messenger from Him, Who, both in nature and grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by His representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ."

This metaphor of "messenger" is key. When we receive messages, we do not make them up or rephrase them in order to make them say what we wish had been said. And thus, if we disagree with the Church's message so seriously that we cannot follow its terms, we cannot reinvent that message to make it easier or more palatable. Rather, we enter into a period of prayer, study, and enquiry to try to understand the message and to understand why we find ourselves opposed to it. And if the matter that puzzles us is one of a binding Church teaching or a central moral teaching, then this may prove a lifetime's work.

In other words, a Catholic conscience cannot accept a settled position against the Church, at least on a central moral teaching. Any difficulty with Church teaching should be not the *end* of the matter but the *beginning* of a process of conversion, education, and quite possibly repentance. Where a Catholic disagrees with the Church on some serious matter, the response should not be "that's that—I can't follow the Church here." Instead we should kneel and pray that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

God will lead our weak steps and enlighten our fragile minds, as Newman recommends in his Sermon 17, "The Testimony of Conscience."

Of course, this view of conscience seems profoundly counterintuitive to modern readers. For Newman, conscience is a hard, objective thing—a challenge to self, a call to conversion, and a sign of humility. And this sits uncomfortably with those who see conscience as a sign of freedom, and freedom as the right to reject what is unpalatable.

When we imagine that conscience is primarily a mark of individual autonomy, we have to pay certain costs; among these is the decay of the idea of moral truth—even when that truth is something we agree with. More than twenty years ago I used to teach the rudiments of morality to trainee nurses in a hospital-based Catholic course. Many in the class were hostile to the idea of moral truth, sometimes asserting that moral opinions were entirely relative, a function merely of the culture in which they happened to appear.

To explain the weakness of such a position I used to ask them whether the British authorities in India were justified in banning the practice of suttee, where a widow was immolated on the funeral pyre of her husband. None of the nurses had any enthusiasm for the practice, but what was extraordinary was the variety of arguments they used to explain their objections—all desperate, convoluted attempts to dodge the general idea of moral truth, to avoid saying that suttee was simply *wrong*.

One master defender of moral truth in our lifetime has been Pope John Paul II. He is also a man learned in modern thought and passionate about freedom and the responsibility that arises from the possession of freedom. And what the pope has aimed at is a path between those who assert moral truth but ignore personal freedom, and those who assert freedom but ignore moral truth.

More, he has charted this path using coordinates established by the Scholastics, developed by Newman, and confirmed by the Second Vatican Council. The pope argues that in their consciences human persons encounter moral truth, freely embrace it, and personally commit themselves to its enactment. This account (in the pope's 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, sections 54-64, for instance) builds upon John Henry Newman's theory of conscience as man's free adoption of God's law. Conscience, in this view, is neither the apprehending of an alien law nor the devising of our own laws. Rather, conscience is the free acceptance of the objective moral law as the basis of all our choices. The formation of a Christian conscience is thus a dignifying and liberating experience; it does not mean a resentful submission to God's law but a free choosing of that law as our life's ideal.

This specifically Catholic view rejects the mistaken doctrine of the primacy of conscience and clearly asserts the primacy of truth. "It is always from the truth that the dignity of conscience derives," the pope writes. "In the case of the correct conscience, it is a question of the *objective truth* received by man; in the case of the erroneous conscience, it is a question of what man, mistakenly, *subjectively* considers to be true. It is never acceptable to confuse a 'subjective' error about moral good with the 'objective' truth rationally proposed to man in virtue of his end, or to make the moral value of an act performed with a true and correct conscience equivalent to the moral value of an act performed by following the judgment of an erroneous conscience."

Of course, one might agree with much of this and still reject the strong conclusion; one might say, "Yes, I accept the idea of moral truth. I just reject the particular set of moral truths the Church proposes." This approach has been tried many times. The endorsement of law as "form" which allows us to reject any determinate "content" and to construct our own content is common to various subjectivists, intuitionists, and Kantians. It is found, for instance, in the still-influential writings of Lawrence Kohlberg.

For the earlier Kohlberg at least, morality is simply certain rational constraints upon freedom; morality is the content-free requirement of form upon our reason. Kohlberg himself equivocated over whether morality is truly empty of content or gives us a little guidance. It is certainly hard to take seriously the notion of morality as contentless logic—a kind of color-in-the-picture-for-yourself ethics. Anyone in a real-life situation that requires moral strength, honesty, and accuracy would surely be repelled by the advice that "morality has nothing to say about the details of your choice; it's all up to you." To say this is to abandon people when they most need and expect guidance.

Morality matters to all of us. This central fact of human experience is often missed by those who put forward some modern, liberal version of conscience. When approached for moral advice, the reply "just go with your conscience" has the effect of further isolating people, driving them back into themselves just when they have courageously stretched out to find answers. The replacement of Newman's view of conscience with the liberal version has been a disaster in key areas of human life.

One place to measure that disaster is in technical thought about moral and religious practice. No one—at least, no Christian—believes conscience simply asserts the first thing that comes into our heads. Con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

science looks for real answers to our questions, and where can it look except to the truth? But then the value of conscience surely lies not in conscience itself but in the truth to which conscience looks for answers. It is the truth that is primary, and it is from the truth that conscience takes its value—for the bare fact that something is *my private belief* has no moral significance whatsoever.

So why would anyone try to oppose conscience to objective truth? Part of the answer lies in a distorted attitude towards the virtue of tolerance. "Tolerance" is often something of a weasel word. Of course, all human beings should tolerate the foibles and weaknesses of their fellows. But by "tolerance" many now mean "never judging." And this is a much more debatable proposition. In fact, believers in tolerance themselves usually acknowledge unspoken limits. Tolerance rarely means refraining from judging racists, or sexists, or pedophiles, or political cheats—naturally enough: these are morally wrong and should be judged so. But the contemporary love of tolerance is severely limited. In effect, the only things we must be tolerant of are people's sexual choices, or perhaps their choices about such life issues as abortion or euthanasia.

Why do people strain to accommodate absolute sexual freedom as a matter of conscience? Why does no one plead for the right to racism or sexism as a matter of conscience? Could it be because the liberal concept of conscience has been specially formulated in order to facilitate the sexual indiscipline that our culture upholds?

Much of the debate over conscience in Catholic circles focuses on the possibility of a conscience set against the Church's teaching. This seems to me a peculiar notion. For a start, it seems to mean that dissenters believe that following the Church on, say, contraception or same-sex relationships, would actually give them a guilty conscience. Yet it seems clear that most dissenters do not fear guilt if they obey the Church. What they fear is precisely the frustration of their unsatisfied desires.

There are many motivations for believing in a conscience against the Church. For example, people often project their personal dilemmas onto external bodies. So someone reared a Catholic might say, "I have a problem with the Church," when his real problem is a contradiction within himself. In truth, most real-life dilemmas are not between the inner person and external authority but between competing desires and reasons that the person has trouble reconciling. As a way of sidestepping the terrible tension a moral dilemma can create, people may identify one side of the dilemma with their own conscience and the other with an external power such as the Church.

It hardly needs saying that this may not be the most accurate way to represent our situation. What conscience actually asks of us is that we make our best moral effort. This is difficult; it has costs and it may well require us to give up what we most want. An informed conscience does not mean finishing up with the judgment that happens to be most convenient or most gratifying to our immediate desires. In fact, when our judgments are highly convenient and gratifying, this is likely a sign that they are the product not of conscience but of wishful thinking. It is unusual in our time to hear or read someone declare that conscience tells them to change their strongest beliefs and sacrifice their most pressing desires. Yet why should conscience always tell us what we want to hear? Why should it never contradict us?

"Perhaps it can," one might respond, "but surely it can also contradict the Church." Catholics should not be content when they find themselves at odds with the Church; we cannot simply "agree to disagree" with the Magisterium, despite the popularity in some quarters of "loyal dissent." A troubled conscience is the *beginning*—the beginning of an encounter with the teaching that will require patience, humility, time, self-scrutiny, conversion.

If individual conscience has primacy—if it is the *end* of each story—then we are bound to have clashes that are utterly irresolvable. Take a Catholic supporter of abortion and euthanasia whose conscience tells him he has the right to receive Holy Communion. Add a priest whose conscience tells him to refuse such Communion. How shall we decide between them if conscience is merely the inner oracle that admits no contradiction?

Some will reject the need for patience and conversion in such circumstances. They will speak of the Church's teaching as if it were something through which they could pick for acceptable items. Once again, this construes the moral life as a matter of personal taste. But no person can guide his conduct purely by taste—for the simple reason that there are no infallible tastes. Everyone is affected by sin. Even non-believers must accept the human propensity to self-deceit, selfishness, and evil. We cannot rely on our tastes in moral matters because we are all vulnerable to acquiring the taste for immorality and egoism. This means that while we should follow a well-formed conscience, a well-formed conscience is hard to achieve. And if we suspect—as surely we all sometimes must—that our conscience is under-formed or malformed in some area, then we should follow a reliable authority until such time as we can correct our consciences. And for Catholics, the most reliable authority is the Church.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I suspect that much of the contemporary debate over conscience is driven by a pseudo-Christian impulse towards individual autonomy. Where the world once valued autonomy as the recognition that we are bound by moral laws, it now understands autonomy as the existential liberty to compose our lives, and even reality, for ourselves. It is as though modern and postmodern man is staging a rerun of the primeval fault of our first parents. We stand on the brink, seeking a way forward, accepting no moral guidance in advance of the choice. Yet, as with the first parents, moral guidance is there. A law has been given, and the choice we are faced with is the ancient one: Do I freely obey, or disobey?

False views of conscience cause havoc not only in the moral life. They have also had an enormous impact on the practice of the faith. In many countries the understanding and practice of the Sacrament of Penance has sadly declined. If people believe in a conscience against Church teaching, then their consciousness of sin will almost certainly decrease. This generally happens in two stages: First, certain sins are reclassified as "not sinful for me, because they don't offend my conscience"; second, a vagueness about the nature and limits of personal conscience lessens the overall sense of sin's seriousness.

The result is that there is less to confess and to be contrite about. Indeed, the whole idea of confession and contrition can be rationalized as a relic of the "old days" before we discovered the primacy of conscience. And so fewer people turn to the Sacrament of Penance as a normal part of their lives. The pardon and peace offered in the encounter with Christ are felt to be unnecessary. Many have the sense that *if* there is still such a thing as sin, it is not too serious, and feeling sad about one's sins, particularly during the *Confiteor* at Mass, is sufficient for forgiveness.

With the decline in confession we have also seen a decline in the understanding and discipline of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Some people believe that the only condition for receiving Holy Communion is that one be present at Mass. That those who go to Communion should be in full communion with the pope, reconciled with their brothers and sisters, and in a state of grace—such an idea would seem strange to many Catholics today. Many would be surprised by the suggestion, let alone the requirement, that they should be regular churchgoers before receiving Communion at, for example, Christmas or a family funeral. As the Sacrament of Penance becomes less visible, there is a danger that people will misunderstand the connection between repentance and Communion—a danger that they will assume that the unrepentant sinner is as welcome at the altar as the repentant sinner.

Of course, our Lord wants everyone to be in church, and He wants all sinners to repent and to return to Him in Holy Communion. But we must recall that in approaching the altar we receive our Lord, body and blood, soul and divinity. To receive Christ whole and entire while rejecting "in conscience" parts of his Church's solemn teaching is to contradict the truth about one's relationship to the Church.

As mistaken views of conscience weaken our understanding of penance and Communion, they begin to cause wider confusion about other sacraments. If morality is determined purely by conscience, then it becomes more difficult to accept baptism as the bringing about of an objective change that is necessary because of original sin. Instead, baptism will be understood as some sort of naming ceremony—or as an entry-into-the-community ceremony.

I suspect a belief in the primacy of conscience has had some even deeper effects on Catholic life and identity. Any religion develops a sense of belonging among its adherents. This is partly the consolation of believing we have seen some of the truth concerning our origins and our destinies, and partly the knowledge of belonging to an ancient tradition and a geographically extended community. Believers know where they are situated within time and space; their lives have meaning because of their beliefs about their origin and their destiny. This is particularly so for Christians. Christianity is historical both because of its longevity and because we believe God Himself entered into history in the Incarnation. Also, Christianity is perhaps the only truly universal religion: it embraces every part of the earth and is compatible with every true culture.

But now this sense of belonging has been diminished by the elevation of conscience to moral primacy. If we believe we should live not by the objective truths safeguarded by the Church but by our own impulses and tastes as they are disclosed to us by conscience, we reject, or at least downplay, the community and the tradition. We are left vulnerable to the temptations of egotism and self-deception. We are shut off from the sense of being part of a sacred society that is worldwide, ancient, and guaranteed by Christ to teach the truth.

Primacy of conscience has not been the sole cause of this change, but it is like a prism through which the many confused beliefs of the modern world are filtered. Suspicion of religion and distaste for moral norms, the refusal to accept any doctrine that is personally inconvenient, religious indifference and sexual indiscipline—all of these are reflected in the modern dogma of the primacy of conscience.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is it too much to suggest that John Henry Newman would have been disappointed by the uses to which his work on Christian conscience has been put? On many occasions Newman explained that true conscience recognizes an external Being, who obliges us to perform certain actions and avoid others. The mind is carried beyond itself to the idea of a future tribunal, where reward and punishment will be assigned. From our inadequacies we envision the need for redemption and atonement.

Newman distinguishes this true conscience from obedience to the law of the land or to the principle of expediency. True conscience will often be felt as an inconvenience: it acts as a brake upon our vanities and disordered desires. Newman believes that conscience, understood in this way, is the foundation of religion—indeed of the fundamental doctrine of theism: "Conscience too teaches us not only that God is, but what He is."

For some decades after the Second Vatican Council, the more popular theologians overestimated, in their enthusiasm for *aggiornamento*, the ability of Catholic culture to survive outside the ghettos that were rapidly being abandoned and dismantled. Those same theologians typically underestimated the malignancy of many streams of thought in the contemporary West. This naïveté, this artless simplicity, still survives among older Catholics, but it has almost vanished among younger committed Catholics.

Nonetheless, a false notion of conscience still carries many away from Catholic practice and Catholic faith. This is the obverse of Newman's claim that true conscience helps us to recognize the one true God. A debased notion of conscience—a barely concealed enthusiasm for autonomy disguised as an appeal to the primacy of conscience—weakens our sense of obligation, damages our purity of heart, and makes it harder to see God. FT

Aegean Story

Euboia, Greece

Briefly, newspapers recite
The facts about the fisherman
Who for two months, day and night,
Went out fishing for his son,

His only child, aged 23,
Who in a winter squall was drowned—
Washed overboard and out to sea—
And whose body was not found

Till the hour his father's net,
Heavy with what he could not keep
And could not throw back or forget,
Heaved up streaming from the deep—

Identified only by the cross,
Gold, incorruptible and pure,
Chained about the neck of loss
And glinting like a fishing lure.

A.E. Stallings

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Torah and Culture

David Singer

Aharon Lichtenstein is a leading figure in modern Orthodox circles. Indeed, his standing in the modern Orthodox camp goes beyond mere respect. For some, in both the United States and Israel, he has become a full-fledged cultural hero.

Born in 1933, Lichtenstein first attained star status as a young Talmudist at New York's Yeshiva University in the 1950s, and his reputation has flourished ever since. (He graduated from Yeshiva College in 1953 and received his rabbinic ordination in 1959.) To begin with, there was Lichtenstein's combination of brilliance and moral rectitude. Everyone at Yeshiva was aware that Lichtenstein was a genius, with an astonishing grasp of the Talmud. Students flocked to his Talmudic discourses, and consulted with him at all hours of the day and night about fine points of Jewish law. But Lichtenstein was more than a brain; he was also a person of the most exacting moral standards, who spoke out on issues of the day and led a student march to protest the starving of children in Biafra.

Lichtenstein also enjoyed star status as the son-in-law of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, the undisputed leader of modern Orthodoxy in the United States. Both men centered their activity on the Yeshiva campus. Lichtenstein attended all of Soloveitchik's Talmud classes, afterward reviewing the material with senior rabbinic students. When Soloveitchik gave public lectures on religious themes, Lichtenstein was always present in the front row. The close bond between the two men was apparent to everyone, and Soloveitchik's extraordinary stock of charisma began to rub off on his son-in-law.

David Singer *is the Director of Research at the American Jewish Committee in New York City.*

One more fact needs to be mentioned: Lichtenstein has a doctorate in English literature from Harvard, mirroring the doctorate in philosophy his father-in-law obtained at the University of Berlin. For students attending Yeshiva, these advanced degrees were more than credentials; they were also passports to a form of Orthodoxy that legitimated involvement with Western culture. They demonstrated that it was possible to be Orthodox and modern at the same time—which was, above all else, what people at Yeshiva yearned for.

Lichtenstein's standing in the modern Orthodox community is certain to receive a further boost now that KTAV Publishing House has released a hefty two-volume collection of his English-language essays. The pieces gathered in *Leaves of Faith: The World of Jewish Learning* and *Leaves of Faith: The World of Jewish Living* range from the early 1960s until today.

At a time when modern Orthodoxy is in retreat on a broad front, Lichtenstein's vigorous championing of the modern Orthodox cause will gladden the hearts of the faithful. But with the publication of *Leaves of Faith*, the time has come for a more considered approach to Lichtenstein's religious enterprise. The alignment of forces in today's Orthodox society is radically different from what it was when Lichtenstein was a student and teacher at Yeshiva University. Prior to the 1970s, modern Orthodoxy was the dominant trend in Orthodox life. Now traditionalists rule the roost, and the influence of Yeshiva University, the leading modernist institution, has declined. Its proclaimed ideal of "Torah and culture" has been called into question by a large part of the Orthodox community.

Orthodox traditionalism, in both its hasidic and yeshiva versions, is strongly isolationist, seeking to limit the interaction of Orthodox Jews with the larger surrounding culture—as well as with their non-Ortho-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dox brethren. From the traditionalist standpoint, Yeshiva University is an educational catastrophe, since it brings the forbidden general culture into the very precincts of Torah.

"Torah and culture" is clearly a key element in modern Orthodoxy, and Lichtenstein has addressed the issue in systematic fashion. The single longest piece he has written—a monster of an essay appearing in *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures*—carries the title "Torah and General Culture: Confluence and Conflict." The identical theme is taken up in two substantial essays reproduced in *Leaves of Faith*: "A Consideration of Synthesis from a Torah Point of View" and "The End of Learning." In all three pieces, Lichtenstein mounts a powerful argument for what he terms the "Jewish value of humanistic culture" and the "spiritual value of a general education." If this sounds like religious humanism, it is. In Lichtenstein's scheme, "humanistic learning" leads directly to a "fuller manifestation of the spirituality of man."

Lichtenstein's commitment to "Torah and culture" has proved unwavering, even as the focus of his educational activity has shifted from the United States to Israel. In 1971, he became one of the heads of Yeshiva Har Etzion, a school combining advanced Talmud study with service in the Israeli army. While Har Etzion does not offer secular studies as part of its formal curriculum, Lichtenstein functions within the institution as an "apostle of culture." He explained his position in a 1986 lecture: "I do not believe that my principled position concerning the value of culture has changed drastically over the last twenty years—although, at the level of educational implementation, contextual circumstances must obviously be taken into account. I held then, and hold ever more firmly now, that Torah is the heart of our personal and collective spiritual existence. . . . I held then, and hold now, that this existence can be enhanced by the enriching and energizing force of general culture."

In recent years, Lichtenstein has intensified his advocacy of "Torah and culture." He refers to a "disequilibrium" resulting from Orthodox traditionalism's growing assertiveness. He explains: "In the 1960s, there was no doubt but that the cause of Torah had to be pressed, massively and constantly. Today, we have, thank God, witnessed a resurgence of *talmud Torah* [Torah study] in all segments of the Orthodox world. Unfortunately . . . that has often been accompanied by what I would regard as an excessive decline of the cultural component. Hence the need to emphasize its importance in order to strive to restore an optimal balance." Still, for Lichtenstein no less than for the opponents of "Torah and culture," Talmud study in the classical mode is the touchstone of authentic Judaism. He champions culture for Orthodox Jews only as a supplement to a talmudic education; the absolute primacy of the latter is never questioned: "Torah," he writes, is "primary and central, and all else ancillary."

Lichtenstein's passion for Talmud is as much intellectual as it is religious. This emerges clearly in "Why Learn *Gemara*?"—another essay in *Leaves of Faith*. On every page of the Talmud, Lichtenstein tells us, "one feels the freshness of virgin birth, the angular edge of rough terrain plowed and yet unplowed, the beck of meandering paths charted and uncharted. There is nothing distilled, nothing lacquered. The sense of challenge and concomitant invigoration is pervasive."

Lichtenstein's reliance on a conceptual mode of analysis in his talmudic discourses further contributes to his sense of Talmud study as an intellectual enterprise. Family loyalty is an element here, since the conceptual approach was pioneered by Rabbi Soloveitchik's grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Brisker. The Brisker style of reading talmudic sources, Lichtenstein observes, is characterized by "incisive analysis, exact definition, precise classification, and critical independence." Opponents of the conceptual method in the yeshiva world—and they are a minority today—argue that it reduces religious texts to a set of scientific notations. Lichtenstein argues instead that "the conceptual approach finds expression in the cutting of new keys. . . . These, in turn, enter the world of learning and enrich its vocabulary, providing fresh implements and fresh impetus for those engaged in the perpetual quest *lehavin u-lehaskil* [to discern and understand]."

Since Lichtenstein stresses the primacy of a talmudic education and underscores the intellectual pleasures attendant upon it, readers may wonder why he does not go all the way and embrace the "Torah only" position. Why does he insist that cultural involvement is necessary for Orthodox Jews?

It is here that Lichtenstein's religious humanism enters the picture, with an argument stressing the link between exposure to culture and the honing of a religious sensibility. Lichtenstein alludes to this when he observes that culture "can inform and irradiate our spiritual being by rounding out its cardinal Torah component." In the essay "Torah and General Culture," Lichtenstein spells out in specific terms how various disciplines contribute to the nurturing of a religious sensibility. The natural sciences "manifestly decipher and describe a divinely ordained order whose knowledge both inspires praise and thanksgiving to the *Ribbono shel Olam* [God] and stimulates our reverential response to Him." Historical study enters the picture as a record of the "drama of conjunction and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

confrontation between providential direction and creaturely freedom." As for the social sciences and humanities, they take the measure of man, who is the pinnacle of God's creation.

Finally, there is great literature: "In reading [great writers] we . . . confront the human spirit doubly, as creation and as creator; Clytemnestra or Hamlet on the one hand, Aeschylus and Shakespeare on the other. As regards enriching our understanding of *ruah memalela* [man as a speaking spirit], imaginative artists have been more illuminating than theoreticians, not only because they have described more powerfully but because they have also probed more deeply. For sheer insight, can Locke or James compare with Dickens or Dostoevsky?" Lichtenstein concludes: "Far from constituting mere straying in alien fields, culture can become a vehicle for enhancing our Torah existence."

And yet, even if we grant that general culture can promote what Lichtenstein calls "lofty ends," why should a Jew turn to it? Or, as he himself puts the question: "Having been chosen as a covenantal community and uniquely endowed with the truest and richest of spiritual treasures in the form of Torah need we—nay, may we—mine alternative nodes?"

Here Lichtenstein's argument takes a radical turn: He contends that culture holds riches unavailable through the Jewish tradition. It is, he writes, "preposterous to pretend to find in our own tradition that which, at a given level and with a certain range, simply is not there." Lichtenstein continues in this vein:

> Our moral and religious lights did not address themselves with equal vigor to every area of spiritual endeavor. *Hazal* [the talmudic sages] engaged little in systematic theology or philosophy and their legacy includes no poetic corpus. . . .
>
> An account of Rabbi Akiva's spiritual odyssey could no doubt eclipse Augustine's. But *his* confessions have been discreetly muted. The rigors of John Stuart Mill's . . . education are not without parallel in our history. But what corresponds to his fascinating *Autobiography*? Or to the passionate *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* of his contemporary, John Henry Cardinal Newman? Our Johnsons have no Boswells. . . .
>
> Where, in our treasure, shall we encounter a despondent and tragically deserted father to compare to King Lear? Of the thousands who have been imprisoned, who has left a record of his experience on a par with Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* or Bonhoeffer's *Letters from Prison*? Do we have a paean of inspired passion to wedded love to match Spenser's *Epithalamion*?

Such claims for culture are far-reaching. From start to finish, however, Lichtenstein's discussion is framed in terms of religious humanism, with culture playing its assigned role as "handmaiden to the divine." At no point in his analysis does culture assume an independent role. This is a matter of religious necessity: "Let me reiterate as vigorously and as emphatically as I can, that *madda* [culture] can only be championed when it is placed in proper perspective—as subsidiary if not subservient to Torah. . . . The primacy of Torah is axiomatic. There can be no parity . . . much less a reversal of roles." It is on this basis alone that Lichtenstein is prepared to endorse the involvement of Orthodox Jews in culture.

In making the case for "Torah and culture," Lichtenstein has the advantage of being fully credentialed in both domains. As a yeshiva head, he enjoys automatic legitimacy in addressing Orthodox concerns; as a Harvard Ph.D., he has instant credibility in dealing with cultural issues. The combined impact of these two elements goes a long way toward explaining Lichtenstein's remarkable self-assurance as an exponent of "Torah and culture."

This self-assurance, however, also reflects the fact that Lichtenstein's theory is modeled on his own experience. The evidence for this is found in a 1985 lecture, published in summary form in *By His Light* under the title "Centrist Orthodoxy: A Spiritual Accounting." Here Lichtenstein states categorically that an exposure to culture contributed in important ways to his own religious development: "Speaking for myself, . . . I can emphatically state that my general education has contributed much to my personal development. I know that my understanding of *Tanakh* [the Bible] would be far shallower in every respect without it. I know that it has greatly enhanced my perception of life in *Eretz Yisrael* [land of Israel]. I know that it has enriched my religious experience." Summing up the matter, he observes that cultural exposure in college and graduate school made him aware, above all, of the "complexity of experience," of the "moral, psychological, and metaphysical complexity of human life."

Lichtenstein's invocation of the "complexity of experience" in the context of a lecture on centrist Orthodoxy—what I term "modern Orthodoxy"—serves to alert us to an extraordinary act of projection on his part. Lichtenstein, in effect, refashions centrist Orthodoxy in his own image by identifying its "very essence" with the effort "to shy away from simplistic and one-sided approaches, to strive to encompass and encounter reality in its complexity."

Lichtenstein maintains that the two make-or-break issues for centrist Orthodoxy are the affirmation of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

general culture and the embrace of the State of Israel. His treatment of Israel offers an interesting opportunity to see how the "complexity of experience" plays itself out in a specific Jewish context. Certainly, he has earned the right to weigh in on the subject, having packed his bags and moved to Israel more than thirty years ago, and he takes it as a given that "all that relates to *Eretz Yisrael* [land of Israel] and the State of Israel should, for *spiritual* reasons, be close to our hearts."

Broadly speaking, Lichtenstein identifies with the religious Zionist camp in Israel. He is clearly set off from *haredi* types in attaching importance to Jewish sovereignty, even if it is embodied in a state that is "very, very imperfect." In terms of practical politics, however, Lichtenstein's pronounced dovishness makes him a dissenter within the ranks of religious Zionism. Affiliated with the tiny Orthodox *Meimad* faction, which advocates territorial compromise with the Palestinians and the creation of a Palestinian state, Lichtenstein is sharply at odds with the majority of the students at his own yeshiva.

Two essays in *Leaves of Faith*—"Religion and State: The Case for Interaction" and "The Ideology of *Hesder*"—are classics in what we might call the "complexity genre" of thought about public life in Israel. Lichtenstein upholds Israel's system of a state-established Orthodox Judaism, while seeking to contain its possible negative effects. Indeed, he rejects out of hand calls for the creation of a secular Jewish state: "The secularist prescription would avert some diseases but kill the patient. . . . We are, by definition and constitution, a people of spiritual destiny and commitment."

At the same time, however, Lichtenstein urges maximum restraint in imposing religious legislation:

> Before a Jewish state institutes religious ordinances, it must evaluate empirically the overall impact of a given law upon the quality of national and individual religious life. It must ascertain whether the game is worth the candle. The possibility that the resistance engendered will outweigh any gain in observance or commitment; that individual personality will be impaired by the impingement upon civil liberties; that the spirituality and the independence of organized religion will be diluted by its increased affiliation with the state—all must be carefully considered, spiritual gain in one sector being balanced against possible loss in another.

In "The Ideology of *Hesder*," the issue is military service for yeshiva students, with Lichtenstein championing the *Hesder* ("arrangement") program that is in place at Har Etzion and several other religious Zionist institutions. *Hesder* runs over five years, with students engaging in full-time Talmud study, but leaving the yeshiva for two protracted periods—nine months and six months—of army training and duty. *Hesder* is attractive, Lichtenstein argues, because it "enables the student, morally and psychologically, to salve both his religious and his national conscience."

As eager as he is to promote *Hesder*, Lichtenstein is unwilling to have it seen as an easy way out of the problems faced by the Orthodox in Israel. Indeed, he is at pains to emphasize that *Hesder* is "more of a challenge than an opportunity," that in embodying a "conflict of loves, not just of labors," it entails a "tenuous moral and ideological balance."

Throughout his career, Lichtenstein has produced talmudic novellae, many available in a four-volume Hebrew series, *Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein's Halakhic Discourses*. Much of this material is highly technical: Specialists concerned with the laws of bailees, indirect property damage, sacrifices, and ritual purity (the topics covered in the four installments) will welcome them, but they are not aimed at the general reader. Happily, *Leaves of Faith* includes more accessible English-language essays in which Lichtenstein focuses on structural components of the halakhic system.

Lichtenstein's exposure to culture is directly related to his overall theological stance—and so one might guess that his immersion in general culture would show up in his work as a Talmudist. In point of fact, however, his novellae are nearly free of any culture-added element. (I say "nearly" because they are written in colloquial modern Hebrew rather than standard rabbinic Hebrew, a usage that Lichtenstein explains by way of reference to the evolution of English prose style.) Lichtenstein's novellae are models of complexity, but it is a complexity rooted in the world of traditional talmudic discourse. The Brisker mode of analysis is showcased in the pages of Lichtenstein's four-volume series. Elyakim Krumbein suggests that the result is "a vast methodological expansion of the familiar Brisker Torah"—a view seconded by Rabbi Shalom Carmy, who insightfully compares Lichtenstein's "possibilities" model with the approach of his father-in-law.

Lichtenstein is well aware that the modern academic study of the Talmud yields a radically different picture than that which emerges in a Brisker analysis. The fact that he shrugs this off is a telling indication of his comfort level in playing the role of a traditional Talmudist. He is determined to keep "venturesome academicians" at arm's length, stating bluntly, in an essay called "The Conceptual Approach to Torah Learning," that "con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

siderations of *emunot ve-deot* [proper belief] effectively bar the acceptance of certain modes of interpretation; specifically, those that denigrate *Hazal* [the talmudic rabbis] and challenge their preeminence."

In "The Human and Social Factor in Halakhah," Lichtenstein sharply criticizes Orthodox spokesmen who depict decision-making in Jewish law as a purely objective process. (Such spokesmen presume that objectivity makes halakhah more "scientific," thus adding to its prestige.) In Lichtenstein's view, the claim that the ideal decisor (*posek*) is a "faceless and heartless supercomputer," who renders judgment with "stony objectivity," is arrant nonsense. All leading decisors, he insists, acknowledge the "rightful place of sensitivity within the process of halakhic decision"; they "approach *psak* [legal discussions] doubly animated by responsibility to halakhah and sensitivity to human concerns." Lichtenstein asks rhetorically: "And would we have it otherwise? Does anyone truly yearn for a *dayyan* [judge] who approaches an *agunah* [a woman unfree to remarry] and a *blitztrop* [blood spot on an egg] with the same degree of equanimity?"

Lichtenstein's rejection of halakhic formalism is likewise at the center of "Does Judaism Recognize an Ethic Independent of Halakhah?" Here he targets the view, again put forward by some Orthodox spokesmen, that "halakhah is self-sufficient" and "every moral dilemma" can be "resolved by reference to code or canon." Lichtenstein dismisses this as "palpably naïve and patently false"—going on to ask: "Who has not found that the fulfillment of explicit halakhic duty could fall well short of exhausting clearly felt moral responsibility." Marshaling a broad range of rabbinic sources, he has little difficulty in demonstrating that "halakhah itself mandates that we go beyond its legal corpus."

Throughout his writings, Lichtenstein's case for "Torah and culture" is powerfully argued, but it is not immune to criticism from those on the Orthodox left and the Orthodox right. The left is represented by such avant-gardists as Irving Greenberg and David Hartman, who consciously seek to expand the boundaries of Orthodoxy by reformulating basic theological positions. In their view, Lichtenstein's pro-culture advocacy is welcome but insufficient: they consider it too cautious, too limiting, and too unwilling to face the challenges of the day. Greenberg and Hartman envision an open-ended dialogue with modern culture, in which Orthodox Judaism will take on a new look. Lichtenstein, for his part, wants nothing to do with their approach; he sees culture as reinforcing the traditional structures of Orthodoxy. Orthodox avant-gardism, he writes, "verges on the blasphemous."

Lichtenstein's use of "blasphemous" in this context brings into focus an important fact. When confronted with elements of the modern cultural system that directly challenge the foundations of Orthodox belief, Lichtenstein stands ready to set them aside in the name of faith. A case in point is biblical criticism, which, as Lichtenstein puts it, assails "the integrity of sacred texts." He is measured but firm:

> Once dogma is acknowledged, the prospect of a conflict between its content and the conclusions of personal inquiry naturally arises; and there is no question as to how, ultimately, a Torah-committed Jew ought resolve it. In the first instance, every effort will obviously be made to avert a collision. Within limits whose bounds may at times admittedly be open to debate, one will strive to explore various avenues: to reexamine data, reinterpret texts, or rethink propositions. But always out of a profound recognition that at the last frontier, . . . the supremacy of revealed truth is acknowledged.

Lichtenstein's willingness to set limits to cultural openness does not impress traditionalists on the Orthodox right. As proponents of "Torah only," they see exposure to general culture in any form as forbidden. Lichtenstein's audacious claim that general culture makes available spiritual riches not found in the Jewish tradition will strike Orthodox traditionalists as nothing short of blasphemous. In the same vein, "Torah only" advocates will dismiss as wishful thinking Lichtenstein's broader contention that cultural exposure can help nurture religious development.

Interestingly, elements of the right-wing critique of Lichtenstein's pro-culture position have been taken up within the modern Orthodox camp itself. William Kolbrener's recent essay "*Torah Umadda*: A Voice from the Academy" zeros in on the "disparity between the ideal of [Torah and culture] and its actual practice in the contemporary university." Kolbrener is far from being an advocate of "Torah only"—he teaches English at Bar Ilan University—but he clearly sees Lichtenstein's conception of culture as outmoded. At elite universities today, Kolbrener observes, "what were once considered the classics of Western literature and philosophy are now often viewed as mere markers of prejudice, power, and oppression." Matthew Arnold's "the best that has been thought and said in the world," which Lichtenstein cites repeatedly as a cultural motto, has been replaced by postmodernism's hermeneutics of suspicion. The result is an elite culture permanently at war with traditional values. Lichtenstein's grasp of the "current zeitgeist," Kolbrener is forced to conclude, is woefully inadequate.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As a confirmed centrist, Lichtenstein fully expects his views on "Torah and culture" to be challenged from both left and right. Kolbrener's criticism, however, raises an issue that goes to the heart of Lichtenstein's enterprise as a modern Orthodox Jew: Can Lichtenstein's delicate balancing act really be sustained over time? Once it is acknowledged that Torah study is "primary and central, and all else ancillary," can the siren call of "Torah only" be long resisted? Conversely, once cultural exposure is established as an urgent desideratum, can areas of inquiry like biblical criticism continue to be viewed as off limits? Buffeted by the opposed forces of traditionalism and avant-gardism, the centrist brand of "Torah and culture" is in permanent danger of dissolution.

Seen from this perspective, the consistency over the years of Lichtenstein's "Torah and culture" stance is astonishing. From "A Consideration of Synthesis from a Torah Point of View" in 1961 to "Torah and General Culture: Confluence and Conflict" in 1997, Lichtenstein has hewed to a middle course, championing a robust centrism in which Torah study is central, even as cultural involvement is proudly affirmed. When necessary, Lichtenstein has spoken out in opposition to avant-gardist tendencies, but he has been equally fearless in standing up to "Torah only" advocates, insisting that a robust Orthodoxy is consistent with a broad humanism. In spite of the temptations it presents, general culture remains for Lichtenstein a "civilizing and ennobling force." FT

Lovejoy Street

The house where we were happy,
Perhaps it's standing still
On the wrong side of the railroad tracks
Half-way down the hill.

Perhaps new people live there
Who think the street name quaint,
And watch the dogwood petals shiver
Down like flakes of paint.

Perhaps they hold each other
When the train goes railing by,
Shaking up the window panes
And dressing down the sky.

And perhaps it strikes them rich
When spring is making shift,
To find the bank is blooming pink
Where we had planted thrift.

Perhaps they reap our roses
In an antique jelly jar.
And maybe they are happy there,
And do not know they are.

A.E. Stallings

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Return of Studs Lonigan

Bette Howland

The boiler had broken down during the night, and though the young Father got things going again, it takes a while to thaw out an old romanesque church, and the small company gathered on a December afternoon sat in their coats. These were pews once occupied by the Lonigans and the O'Neills—the names James T. Farrell gave these families when he put them into his novels. But that was back in the days when St. Anselm's parish was Irish and its stained glass windows were new. How long they'd withstood Chicago's weather and grime. The year was almost over before the mayor got around to issuing, after many petitions and pleas, a proclamation declaring December 18, 2004, "James T. Farrell Day" to honor the centennial of the writer's birth. A few fans, a couple of students and teachers, and some descendants of the original Lonigans and O'Neills were celebrating their small victory.

Chicago may be the second city, or third, but not in its literary tradition. Think of the twentieth century without Farrell, Theodore Dreiser, Richard Wright, Nelson Algren, Saul Bellow—all of whom, sooner or later, left home. A prophet is not a prophet in his own country.

The Washington Park neighborhood lies near the lake and the gray Gothic towers of the University of Chicago, but this is a working-class town. On hot summer nights you could smell the sweaty wind from the stockyards to the west, and the smoke from the steel mills all the way to East Chicago and Gary. Though these streets have fallen on hard times, the heavy masonry and brick give the churches, the two- and three-flat buildings, and large apartment houses a look of fortress-like solidity and permanence. They must have influenced Farrell's prose. Not far from St. Anselm's, at 58th and Indiana, a sign may soon be going up, renaming the block "James T. Farrell Way." This was the heart of the old neighborhood: the Mom and Pop groceries, the drugstores where you had to exchange a nickel for a slug to make a phone call, the movies and the pool hall where the gang hung out. The corner. A corner of Chicago that belongs to Farrell, and to his most famous creation, Studs Lonigan.

In celebration of the centennial, the Library of America republished Farrell's *Studs Lonigan*. The trilogy had long been recognized as a classic, but now, with the appearance of this new edition, it was official: Farrell had entered the Pantheon of American letters. Reviewers granted the novel belonged there, though to some it seemed dated—Studs didn't amount to much of a hero, not even an anti-hero, and the racial, ethnic, and anti-Semitic slurs made them wince. Unlike these critics, the world Farrell brought to "life on the page" wasn't politically correct. Contemporary readers are accustomed to a mudslide of words that couldn't be spelled out in his day. It's the epithets that startle now, like a slap in the face—the way he meant them to.

It's no secret that Farrell came to resent the success of the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy. Over the course of his long and amazingly productive career, all his other work would be measured against it. The Danny O'Neill series, *Bernard Clare*; the novels of the Universe of Time; volumes of short stories, journalism, literary criticism; his steady and persistent portrayal of "the American way of life" through the lives he knew so well. He became a writer taken for granted;

BETTE HOWLAND's *last essay in* FIRST THINGS *was "Retelling Genesis" (December 2003). She wrote the preface for Bob Golan's* A Long Way Home: A Story of a Jewish Youth, 1939-1949.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he wrote "too much." (Those thick glasses—crystal balls in his old age—weren't props; he was driven in part by fear of going blind.) His own favorite novel was his last, the deeply personal *Invisible Swords*; but by then not many were paying attention. In the final months of his life, Farrell was signing copies of a new edition of the trilogy for the publisher: another autograph, another dollar. He needed the money. At the same time a television miniseries was portraying Studs, yet again, as the movie tough guy he so longed to be. Fifty-some books on the shelves, and Farrell remained the author of *Studs Lonigan*.

In the Lonigan trilogy Farrell appears as four-eyed Danny O'Neill, a "goofy punk" who wants to be a writer. Farrell's eyes were so bad he couldn't see a ball coming, but something told him where it would be, and he won more letters for sports—baseball, football, basketball, and wrestling—than anyone in the history of St. Cyril's High. For a time he couldn't decide between baseball, his lifelong love, or literature. One way or another, he meant to do great deeds, to make a name for himself, a magical name. It was a choice of heroes.

As he soon found out, "to be a young man with literary aspirations is not to be particularly happy."

It might be hard to appreciate now how bold it was then for a young man like Farrell, from Chicago's Irish South Side, to take up such a trade. Dreiser, the son of a German Catholic immigrant, was the first American writer of anything near his stature to come from such stock and to bear a "foreign" name. (Dreiser's older brother, a successful songwriter, changed it to Dresser.) Farrell and Dreiser met in 1936. Farrell, barely into his thirties, had published half a dozen books; Dreiser was a giant of American letters, "the Hindenburg of the novel" in Mencken's inspired phrase. "A big bulk of a man," Farrell recalled, "self-centered, not too graceful." Dreiser was wondering what this young writer wanted from him. Advice, a favor, a loan? What can one writer do for another? In parting, he had to ask—he hadn't caught his visitor's name.

By the next time they met, the last time—it was 1944—things had changed. Farrell was famous; Dreiser had become an old man. He coughed and cleared his throat and drank a lot of water, and ranted some about the state of the art. "Farrell, why do people write books like that? Why do they write about drinking? . . . Farrell, that's nothing to write about. I know all about drinking and drunks." Dreiser was struggling with his albatross, *The Bulwark*, and telegrammed Farrell, anxiously soliciting "an honest opinion." Farrell could always be counted on for that. He was asked to be a literary executor: "I accepted this as an honor." Yes. Here was a hero of his youth. Farrell's friendship had been a spar in a storm, and in these late exchanges we can read the isolation of Dreiser's last years. Farrell had no inkling, in those heady days of fame, that he would become a neglected writer in his time. But that was the name of the game he had chosen to play.

Farrell was not a lesser Dreiser. He never considered himself, as so many critics have, a disciple, and except in his own gloomier moods didn't agree with Dreiser's ideas. (Luckily, Dreiser didn't always agree with his own ideas himself.) Farrell never lost his sense of having to put up a fight, to define himself *against*. This came with being a writer "of plebeian origin":

> He sees things from the outside, not the inside. . . . His subject is his own world around him. . . . The feelings of alienation he meets sometimes make him hardened, stubborn and resistant. He spends his youth in struggling to get what a son of Groton acquires as if by natural right.

A son of Groton might have his own ups and downs, but the issue here is legitimation. "Dreiser had to plead his case as a writer," Farrell wrote. "Just as he had to discover for himself, so his sympathetic readers similarly had to discover." Dreiser gave Farrell permission—this is what one writer can do for another. It was a spiritual debt, and Farrell passed it on.

Sister Carrie, *An American Tragedy*, *Studs Lonigan*. They produced masterpieces of American realism, and that realism was the kiss of death: it offered little to Theory. Theory offered nothing to them. They were the great Bad Writers. For almost half a century, from the stillborn publication of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* in 1900 to Farrell's obscenity trial in the forties, they would be hounded with charges of indecency, lewdness, profanity. Their books were banned, as if the undoubted power of their work resided in shock value. Its real power was moral depth. The Carries and Clydes, Danny O'Neills and Studs Lonigans hadn't been taken seriously in American fiction before. Someone had to plead the case for them.

This wasn't slumming. Carrie is "a fair example of the middle American class." For Dreiser this was not a status but a struggle, and membership was self-selected—those who were not contented with their lot. Farrell considered setting his trilogy in a poor immigrant neighborhood, but that would have been polemical. And besides, it wasn't true: not to fact—just before the Crash, Paddy Lonigan turns down an offer of $100,000 for a building he owns; the Lonigans are hardly coal Irish—and not to his subject, which was, from first to last, the making of Americans. A work in progress.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Dreiser, born "on the banks of the Wabash" (Indiana's anthem, a song he wrote with his brother), Chicago was the first vision of the big city, a city of aspiration, a city of light; "a city that never was on land or sea." He'd started out as a newspaperman and, like Farrell after him, he scarcely bothered to change real names for his novels. And yet there is a nimbus of fairy tale to his Chicago, a place under enchantment, "the show and shine of life." As in a fairy tale, the spell must vanish; all is destined to "permanently disappear." And so the nervous vitality of his prose: he couldn't wait to get it down before it was gone for good. The Chicago Farrell was born into more than a generation later was a city of neighborhoods, each of them smaller than any small town—"a corner of America where many of my memories hide as though in blocks of stone and dull and commonplace looking streets." Farrell's Chicago is a city of implacable reality, and he records it with a patient and faithful accumulation of fact. Dreiser's characters encounter the city, as he did, with a greenhorn's wonder and desire. They have few attachments and, usually—like a protective charm of anonymity—WASP names. As Carrie's story begins, she's on a train leaving home with a kiss and a sigh, and we hear no more about it. In the opening scene of *Studs Lonigan* we get home, family, church, school, even a local pol (a Democrat, naturally). No anonymity here. Farrell's characters are very much fixed by history, ethnicity, and bounded by place: the institution of the Neighborhood, "a personal past" written in stone.

There was a real Studs. According to his death certificate, William "Studs" Cunningham was born on September 12, 1903. He was single, living at home, and working for his father as a housepainter when he died. It was March 10, 1929. The cause of death was four days of bronchial pneumonia following a bout of the flu.

Farrell wrote a short story, "Studs," for a college English class. On a visit to "the old neighborhood" the narrator attends the wake of Studs Lonigan—cause of death "a hexagonal of whores, movies, pool, alky, poker, and craps." In spite of the bravado, the tone is elegiac. Studs had been a childhood hero; he had a lot of guts and a certain swagger, and though a little guy, "he could fight like sixty." And he was a member in good standing of the Gang, "the bad boys" who, once upon a time, had seemed "proper models." The elegy is for the narrator; in saying goodbye to Studs he's saying goodbye to the old neighborhood and all it stands for. And he has the last word: "He was a slob."

A professor thought there might be more to the story. Farrell had in mind a series of novels about his alter ego, Danny O'Neill, a portrait of the artist as an angry young man, and felt that writing about Studs would get him outside of himself, give him distance from his own beginnings. There was some unfinished business.

Something happened. "I decided that my task was not to state formally what life meant to me, but to try and recreate a sense of what life meant to Studs Lonigan." Farrell is forsaking the trappings and vanities so dear to the heart of the young writer: subjectivity, fine writing, judgment, a moral. The unnamed narrator of the short story will become the Danny O'Neill of the novel, and Studs's destiny will unfold "in his own words, his own actions, his own patterns of thought and feelings." Objectivity is the morality of *Studs Lonigan*, a *Bildungsroman* as a cautionary tale.

He's the first thing we see; in fact, two of him: "Studs Lonigan, on the verge of fifteen," face to face with himself in the bathroom mirror. A "Caporal pasted on his mug" and a sneer on his lip, he's practicing his tough guy act: "looking the way Studs Lonigan ought to look."

This is the night of his grammar school graduation. In the midst of habitual bickering the family will assemble itself respectably enough; Father Gilhooley will deliver an address as long-winded as any school principal's, giving the proud parents their money's worth, while in the hot stuffy basement room the graduates in question squirm in their seats. Entertainment will be staged, diplomas distributed, congratulations extended all around; and at a party afterwards, the boys and girls will celebrate their "official maturity" with a kissing game. This has been a rite of passage. They know they ought to feel different, changed; but how can they be changed, when they have not been moved? Somehow the ceremony has not been for them. Probably the only rites they recognize are those with the attraction of the forbidden— smoking in the bathroom, kissing. There are many rites of initiation in *Studs Lonigan*, and the ones that count most are the initiations of the streets.

Studs is acutely self-conscious, with the self-consciousness of the outsider. "He never let anyone know how he felt." While his friends crowd around the nuns, diploma scrolls in hand, saying goodbye, Studs sneaks into the bathroom for a smoke. Lone Wolf Lonigan: "He wasn't the kind of bird that got soft." Enter Weary Reilley, his rival, his nemesis, a bigger boy and "looking like a much badder guy"—which he is. Studs is anxious about high school, a new neighborhood where he'll have to fight all over again "to become somebody in the gang." Weary isn't going, and "the old man can lump it." "Gonna work?" asks Studs. Weary answers with a menacing "Maybe." They talk about "the old dump," schoolboy pranks, and Sister Bertha (a.k.a. Battling and Bat-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tleaxe), sizing each other up and staring each other down. Studs wants to be bigger and badder; but he's not really bad, not bad enough—not Weary Reilley.

Studs is an alter ego too. He longs to be a Somebody, to be renowned, reckoned with—to hear the magic in his name. He sees himself as in a movie, an actor before an audience. Are they wondering who he is? Have they heard his name? There can't be many novels in which one name is so relentlessly repeated. But Studs is an outsider also to himself, a spectator in his own life; there will always be two of him. And always he will stifle his instincts, his feelings—his self—in the name of Studs Lonigan. If not he'd lose face, the face in the mirror. It's a choice of heroes.

Once and once only Studs hears the magic in his name. "You know who that is? That's *Studs Lonigan*. He's the champ fighter of the block."

The block.

There's a larger world in the novel. The graduation in *Young Lonigan* takes place on the "historic day" when Wilson is renominated; *Young Manhood* opens with the older boys going off to War—and Studs expelled for playing hooky; *Judgment Day* begins in early 1929 and continues on into the Crash and the Great Depression. Newspapers, newsreels, radio; political speeches and soap box oratory; strikes, demonstrations, race riots, parades; vignettes of minor characters—Danny O'Neill, simple-minded Vinc Curley, the Jew Davey Cohen. As his own world narrows, the outside world expands around him, a panorama of the life and times of Studs Lonigan.

And there's a larger world of feeling. "The summer ahead": the joys of youth, health and strength and innocence; its romantic ideals and pleasurable sorrows; the sun and leaves of Washington Park; young love, Studs and Lucy in the tree (the high place before the fall); Paddy Lonigan's sentimental reveries about visiting the Old Country one day. The strongest bond, between father and son, remains awkward and unspoken. "If only they could get a grip on the right words." Like all Farrell's stories of his Irish-Catholic South Side, this is also an immigrant novel, a poignant subtext: parents divided from their children by the very things they hoped to give them. For many at the graduation, those prized diplomas are the first in the family. Paddy Lonigan represents a generation that had to work its way up, their aspirations as material as the bitter poverty they came from. And what now? The prevailing feeling is of loneliness, disappointment, something missing.

Farrell's immigrants speak English; there isn't the radical disjunction in the New World of Henry Roth's East European Jews in *Call It Sleep*. (My grandparents spoke that same broken English, and as a child I thought the other tongue they spoke must be broken too.) And yet, one can still hear in the words of the elders—"Sure, isn't he the walkin' saint of God?"—an old-country lilt, a music absent from the speech of their young. Studs' generation speaks the language of the streets. Those "awful" names—Studs, Slug, Hink, Husk, Slew—are the sign of their initiation, the rites of the tribe. Slang in Farrell doesn't date; it's already dated. With repetition it takes on a cumulative force, the voice of the chorus, an epitaph: "Rough and tough and the real stuff."

That's the slogan of *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan*. With the second volume the pace picks up, a dozen years pass, and we're in the era of Prohibition: the Roaring Twenties, bootlegging and bathtub gin and gangland Chicago the epicenter—a celebrated chapter of the American Romance. That's not how Farrell sees it. This is a blow-by-blow account of Studs' descent into the hexagonal; the poolroom and the corner, boozing and bawdy houses are the map of his world. The wake Studs attends for a pal in the gang could well be the wake in the short story—his own. He wants his life to change, but not himself; like most of us, he just wants to be who he is, only luckier and happier. "The old Studs Lonigan." He means the young one.

In a crucial scene in the novel Studs finds himself at High Mass on Christmas morning. There's standing room only in the vast open church—this is St. Anselm's—and he keeps looking around self-consciously to see who he knows and who knows him. He's hungover, his head aches, his ankle throbs—he twisted it jumping out a window of a brothel in a police raid. He rubs spittle in his eyes to stay awake. And to make matters worse, a blonde in a squirrel coat sits next to him, knee to knee. "He'd let himself in for it." This is going to be long.

He mumbles an Act of Contrition, "trying to make it rise from a penitent heart." He'd better keep his mind on this or else it won't count. But he can't stop thinking of the night before, "proud of his stunt, escaping the Law"; and he can't stop thinking of the girl, smelling her perfume, trying to inch closer. Maybe she's "the girl he always knew he would some day meet"; she'll be "his woman," she'll "reform" him; he'll feel for her what he once felt for Lucy. (He's blown a second chance with Lucy—slobbishly.) Has she heard of him? Studs Lonigan? He palms his hands together "to look like he's praying," hides them so she won't see the nicotine on his fingers. And so it goes, his thoughts chasing in circles, a dog biting its tail, counterpointed by the somber cadences, the slow and sacred progress of the Mass. He can't keep up, he's lost his place. What part is this? "Some Catholic he was!" The Mass belongs to memory; a familiar

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

phrase, the sound of the choir, recalls an image of purity, his own days as a choir boy, rushing to church mornings "with the snow coming down"; and the knell of the bell, the hush, "the sudden feeling of change in the people," recalls the mystery. "Studs would have given anything to have received Holy Communion on this Christmas Day."

Here is the necessary sustenance: his loneliness and longing, union, communion, the need to be part of something larger than himself. He bows his head in unison, tapping his breast. *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi*. . . . Studs perceives the failure of his life with a Catholic sense of sin—"a sense of sin like vomit." The drunken orgies, the squalid sex—the only kind he's ever known—the night before and all the days and nights have taken a toll on his body, and a toll on his soul, the venue of free will. Use it or lose it. Studs is throwing away his life.

He never gets up the nerve to talk to the girl and goes to the poolroom to brag about his exploits. "But he didn't think that he had ever felt so low in his whole life."

He will sink lower still.

And that's where matters were meant to end, with Studs greeting the New Year, 1929, drunk and getting rolled in the gutter. More or less as the real Studs ended up, as the short story ended. There was something wrong with that now. Studs never let anyone know how he felt, but we know. Farrell had given him so much—given him consciousness, given him words. Why not more? There was still some unfinished business.

So Studs gets a reprieve. *Judgment Day* opens with Studs on a train, returning from yet another funeral. While his pals pass the bottle, reminiscing about the old neighborhood and the old gang, Studs gazes out the window at the small towns and bare February fields of Indiana, hoping to hear them talking about him, remembering the old Studs Lonigan, the champ fighter of the block. He's on the wagon now. The pneumonia he contracted that winter night has broken his health, damaged his heart. Studs has sobered up; he's discovered his own mortality. Daydreaming, he sees himself as a "mystery" to "the hick villagers, stopping to gape at the train." Are they "wondering who he was, and where he is going?" The movie of his life is running.

A voice breaks in: "Studs must be in love. He's moping so much he doesn't even hear us talking about him."

Studs, the outsider, is taken outside of himself. He must be in love. He's got a girl, Catherine, a decent Irish Catholic girl, and he's thinking of popping the question tonight. Only he's not sure; she's not Lucy. All through dinner, miserably self-conscious, never one with words, Studs agonizes over how to begin, when—just like that—the question pops itself. They walk through the park toward the lake, "leaving the city behind them," and their kiss is "like an exaltation he would never forget." This is it, the summer is still ahead, he's going to get "everything that he wished for, all that he deserved." But it's windy and chilly, Catherine keeps fretting about his health—why won't he quit smoking?—and, standing at the breakwater, watching darkness closing over the lake, waves smashing into jagged rock, Studs knows what's ahead, where he's been heading all along. *O that day, that day of wrath.*

You know how this goes. The lovers quarrel, they make up, Catherine gets pregnant. Then the Crash. Studs, the Little Guy, becomes an Everyman, part of something larger than himself at last, the Community of the Great Depression, the small individual failures in the large historical fact. And he wants what every man wants: a home, a family, a job—a life. Adult ties and adult responsibilities. That would be heroism enough. But his destiny is now Everyman's. There are many rites of initiation in *Studs Lonigan*, and there remains one more. The trilogy begins with a boy on the verge of life looking at his face in a mirror. It ends as a nurse covers his face "with a white sheet." In my tradition, the Jewish tradition, it is the custom in a house of mourning to cover the mirrors with a sheet.

Early editions of *Studs Lonigan* featured an introduction by a sociologist, a specialist in street gangs, lending a patina of respectability and educative value to a novel bound to be read by flashlight under the bedcovers. Certainly the book covers—cheap paper, sleazy drawings—hinted as much. Those readers seeking the hidden and forbidden, sex scenes, four-letter words, found something unexpected—themselves. A book can be a rite of passage too.

It was for Farrell. There really was more to the story. The Danny O'Neill/Farrell of the trilogy wants "to purge himself completely of the world he knew, the world of 58th street, with its God, its life, its lies." The real Farrell, the writer, never left home. The world of 58th street, his Irish-American roots, would always be the mother lode. Those blocks of stone and dull and commonplace streets were a life.

Someone once said that there are two kinds of writers: Those whose sympathy is so great it amounts to the same thing as impartiality—that's Dreiser; and those whose impartiality is so great it amounts to the same thing as sympathy. That's Farrell. In getting outside of himself and inside Studs, "the would-be tough guy and archetypal adolescent" as the Library of America describes him, Farrell was developing his own kind of realism, an ironic realism in the true

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sense of irony—"the use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning." This accounts for the peculiar resonance of his work. He would write many books about lives of aspiration, like his own; his fullest expression would be in *Studs Lonigan*, a life lived without aspirations.

Dreiser had the temerity to call one of his novels a tragedy—an *American* tragedy. When did Farrell discover that that's what he was writing? There is no tragedy without the quality of mercy. The short story ended with a verdict, private and final; the judgment of *Judgment Day* is impartial and universal, embracing us all. Yet what are we to make of the last lines of "Studs"? The image of his grave in the rain, "soppy and soaked, and fresh with the wet, clean odors of watered earth and flowers." Maybe it was there all along. Tragedy had been reserved for heroes—warriors and kings. Dreiser and Farrell were reclaiming it for the novel, and as a native form.

"I'm not a religious person," Farrell writes in an essay on—of all things—parochial school education. A modest understatement. In spite of the cross on his coffin—and also a wreath from the Yankees—he was as stubborn and outspoken in his atheism as in everything else. Still, nearing sixty, the former star athlete of St. Cyril's goes on to credit his Alma Mater with feelings he tried, "as best I could," to put into his work.

> I got a sense there was something before me and something after me . . . and that I was living in a continuity where there was depth of experience . . . an idea of greatness and grandeur and also of mystery and reality—where you face tragedy, you face yourself.

To make a hero out of the likes of Studs Lonigan. To conceive of his life as a tragedy. And what else could it be, when it became *his* life? FT

Realism

Sing to the Lord a new song (Isaiah 42:10)

The world that welcomed the divorce
  Of word and thing is now outmoded.
The two are one again. The world
  Of their new marriage has exploded.
And in the aftermath we watch
  As brilliant particles of truth,
Like stars that tell us where we are,
  Bring our gaze back down to earth.

Words and their meanings now adhere
  To eyelash, fingernail, and throat,
And travel through the dark canals
  Inside us. All that was remote
And held at arm's length from its name
  Has found a place upon the tongue.
The words, though new to us, are old
  Words to an even older song.

How did it go? *In every name*
  The letters bring a soul to life.
In every soul a world is coiled
  Around a staff of joy and grief.
And every grief renews the bond
  Between the body and the soul.
And every joy thrills with the fear
  Of shattering what had been whole.

Mark Jarman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Theology for Physicists

Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality
By John Polkinghorne
Yale University Press. 208 pp. $24.

Reviewed by Stephen M. Barr

The story of science and religion since the Middle Ages has been one of estrangement rather than conflict. When the Aristotelian synthesis shattered, science and theology drifted apart, becoming at last disconnected universes of discourse.

Over the last few decades many theologians and some scientists have attempted a new "dialogue of science and religion" in order to end this estrangement. A leading figure in this dialogue has been John Polkinghorne, a respected theoretical particle physicist at Cambridge University who, in the early 1980s, left scientific research in mid-career to become an Anglican clergyman and devote himself to writing on science and theology.

The science-theology dialogue has chiefly dealt with natural theology and such basic issues as the existence of God, the order and intelligibility of the universe, the evidence for design and purpose in nature, and the limitations of a crassly reductionist materialism. It has brought greater understanding and even some agreement among people of diverse backgrounds and concerns, ranging from agnostic seekers to people of traditional faith.

And now, according to Polkinghorne, the dialogue is ready for a new stage—where theologically deeper and specifically Christian subjects are addressed. *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality*, based on Polkinghorne's 2003 Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary, is a contribution to this new stage of engagement.

Along the way, Polkinghorne argues that going beyond the basics of theism can make belief more credible to nonbelievers. He makes an analogy with natural science: "Significant scientific advances often begin with the illuminating simplicity of a basic insight, . . . but they persist and persuade through the detailed and complex explanatory power of subsequent technical development."

In the same way, theism is more persuasive in the form of a richly elaborated theological tradition than in the bare abstractions of philosophy. He therefore maintains that the next stage of dialogue is best conducted from within a particular tradition of faith. For him, the tradition of "Trinitarian theology" provides

Stephen M. Barr *is a theoretical particle physicist at the Bartol Research Institute of the University of Delaware. He is the author of* Modern Physics and Ancient Faith *(University of Notre Dame Press).*

Less time searching. More time reading.

Announcing a Convenient New Resource for the Serious Reader

Finally. A bookstore that features only the best titles on religion and public life. And it's only a mouse click away.

At the **FT BOOKSTORE**, you'll find books by First Things editors, contributors, friends, and a selection of fascinating titles recently reviewed in the journal.

Now locating the books that you want to read is as easy as going to our website, www.firstthings.com. Visit us today!

FT BOOKSTORE Your gateway to the best books at the best price.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the most persuasive and satisfying "theological thickness."

Polkinghorne contrasts his own attitude toward tradition with that of three other prominent "scientist-theologians": Paul Davies, Ian Barbour, and Arthur Peacocke. In order of increasing respect for Christian tradition, Davies represents the "deistic" approach, Barbour the "theistic," Peacocke the "revisionist," and Polkinghorne the "developmental."

Polkinghorne's understanding of proper theological "development" owes more to modern liberal Anglicanism than to John Henry Newman. Nevertheless, in spite of what he calls his "flexibility of hermeneutical strategy," Polkinghorne really is quite traditional in many ways. He believes in the Trinity, the virgin birth, the empty tomb, and the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. Although comfortable with modern biblical criticism, he is able to muster a degree of skepticism toward the hyperskeptical approaches of its more extreme practitioners.

Polkinghorne also differs from the other scientist-theologians he discusses in his view of the proper relation between theology and science. Davies, Barbour, and Peacocke are all to some degree "assimilationists" who seek "to achieve a greater merging of the two disciplines." Polkinghorne sees a danger in this: Christian theology has its own sources, insights, methods, and internal logic, so that it risks being denatured if "theological concerns become subordinated to the scientific." Still, theology should take account of scientific insights, for these not only raise important questions for theological reflection but can even "motivate the imposition of certain metaphysical constraints" on what could be considered satisfactory answers. Nevertheless, unlike Peacocke, Polkinghorne does not think any "radical revision" of Christian doctrine is required to meet the challenges raised by modern scientific thought.

The particular questions addressed in *Science and the Trinity* concern the role of Scripture, God's relationship to the universe, the nature of what Polkinghorne awkwardly calls "God in Godself," the Eucharist, and eschatology. Polkinghorne's method in addressing these questions is empirical and inductive. "Because I am a theoretical physicist," he writes, "the style of thinking I adopt is a 'bottom-up' approach, which seeks

THE Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

MERRIMACK, NH • ROME, ITALY

Read more, learn more. . .

"[Thomas More] students belong to one of the most intense academic communities in the country." - Donald Asher, Cool Colleges

"Thomas More College is probably the only place where you can read a Shakespeare play, translate Greek, write a paper, wash dishes, chat with a professor, pray, laugh, rake leaves, sing, finish a novel, attend class, and read poetry aloud, all between lunch and dinner."

- Alumna quoted in Choosing the Right College

- **Participate in Humanities class every morning with the whole student body**
- **Read and write more than in a Great Books Program**
- **Study in Rome for three months as a sophomore**
- **Live, pray and work in a close, Catholic community of students and professors**
- **Graduate with a B.A. in philosophy, political science, literature or biology**
- **Still accepting applications for fall 2005**

Contact: Joanne Geiger, Director of Admissions
800-880-8308 | www.thomasmorecollege.edu

Also accepting applications for. . .

The 30th Collegiate Summer Program for High-School Students

Session I: July 10 - July 23
Session II: July 24 - August 6

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to move from experience to understanding." He certainly does not reject the idea of divine revelation, top-down though it may be. But he tends to conceive of revelation as "an experiential encounter," in which "critical episodes" led the people of Israel, later the first Christians, and finally ourselves to "revelatory insights." The Bible is thus a "record of experience," in the interpretation of which "creative freedom" is allowed—while tradition is the sum of the Christian community's ongoing experiences and reflections, to be mined in an eclectic way.

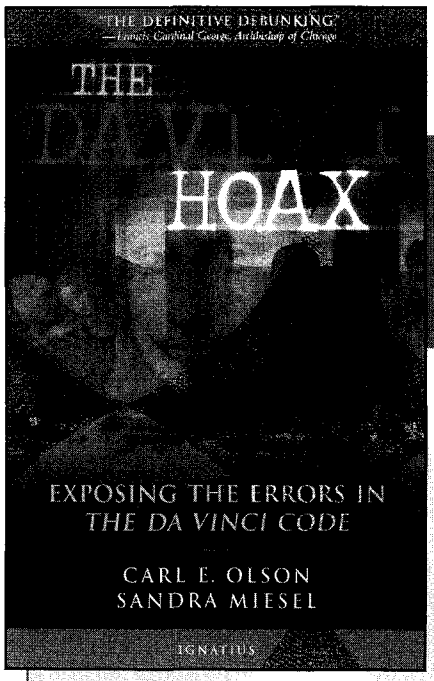
In other words, Polkinghorne does not wish to be in "unthinking thrall to the past" or to authority, whether in the form of a book or a Church. And yet, he also wishes to avoid the danger of "loose individualism" or "rampant relativism" that could lead to "willful or fantastic manipulation" of the Word of God. He acknowledges that some "degree of control" must be exercised by "the oversight of a truth-seeking community" and "the sifting and receiving role played by the whole Christian community."

Who is this community and how much sifting does it do? "It is comparatively easy," he assures the reader, "for those of us who seek to 'operate within the orbit where the bible is interpreted' to recognize each other, even if sometimes we find the other person saying something very different from what we ourselves think." "What we ourselves think" is a typical turn of phrase for Polkinghorne, and it suggests that much individualism remains even after all the sifting has been done.

There is a great deal of value in Polkinghorne's reflections on many of the subjects he takes up in this book. On several key points, however, he is every bit as radical a revisionist as Peacocke. This is particularly so with regard to the omniscience, immutability, and simplicity of God.

Polkinghorne embraces the fashionable idea that God does not know the future—either because it does not exist to be known, or because God deliberately chooses not to know it. He argues that this view of omniscience makes room for free will, simplifies theodicy, accords with the developmental nature of the world, and makes God's knowledge truer to that which is known (as though things that *happen* successively must be *known* successively).

These are flimsy arguments upon which to base a revision of doctrine. The first was demolished by St.



"THE DEFINITIVE DEBUNKING."
— Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago

THE DA VINCI HOAX
Exposing the Errors in *The Da Vinci Code*
Carl E. Olson & Sandra Miesel

Make sure that your family and friends aren't taken in by the Da Vinci hoax. Best-selling author **Dan Brown** says that his book, ***The Da Vinci Code,*** has all the answers to Christianity and the truth about Jesus.

But **Carl Olson** and **Sandra Miesel** aren't buying it. In this exposé of sloppy research, misleading evidence, and outright fabrication in Dan Brown's book, you'll learn the REAL truth about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Leonardo da Vinci and more.

If you, or loved ones, have questions about what's real and what's phony, turn to ***The Da Vinci Hoax.*** The next time someone asks you about *The Da Vinci Code,* make sure you have an answer.

ISBN 1-58617-034-1, 375 pp, Sewn Softcover, $15.95

Want to learn more about *The Da Vinci Hoax?* Download free study guides, bulletin inserts, facts sheets, interviews and more! Go to www.DaVinciHoax.com

ignatius press 1-800-651-1531 • WWW.IGNATIUS.COM
P.O. BOX 1339, FT COLLINS, CO. 80522

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Augustine, who pointed out that God's knowledge of future acts no more renders them unfree than our own knowledge of past acts renders them unfree. The third and fourth arguments are based on the fallacy that acts of knowing must partake of the qualities of the things known. (It is not true, for example, that one's knowledge of smells is smelly, or that one's knowledge of evil must be evil. No more, it would seem, must knowledge of change be changeable.)

BUT ASIDE FROM this philosophical flimsiness, what is surprising about Polkinghorne's arguments, given the context in which they are made, is that they are not based on anything science has taught us about the world. In fact, his position is open to the objection that it does not square with what physics has learned about the nature of time. One's stream of consciousness can be divided into past, present, and future, and Newtonian physics projected this tripartite division onto the whole physical universe. But Einstein showed that spatio-temporal relationships are more subtle: there is no absolute meaning to the question of what is happening (or coming into being) "now" throughout the whole universe. And if it is a mistake to project the timeline of our mental states onto the entire universe, it is even less justified to project it onto God, who infinitely transcends the universe.

It is equally ill-defined to speak of "the future" or "the past" in some global sense. Furthermore, to correlate God's supposed past, present, and future mental states with what is going on in the world "simultaneously" with them imposes upon the world exactly the one-dimensional temporal structure that physics tells us it does not have.

Polkinghorne attempts to preserve the idea of divine immutability by positing within the divine nature both a "temporal pole" and an "eternal pole." He suggests this may help resolve what might be called the empty throne problem—"how one is to understand the continuing providential governance of the universe during the episode of the earthly life of the incarnate God." The traditional answer, according to Polkinghorne, is that since only the Son was incarnate, the other two Persons of the Trinity were still in heaven to mind the store, as it were. He rightly prefers the idea (which he somehow imagines to be Calvinist) that the Word continued "to participate in the governing of creation" during Christ's earthly life. How is this to be conceived? He suggests, with "some trepidation" and "considerable tentativeness," that "it was *the temporal pole* of the Second Person that became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, while the eternal pole continued its timeless participation in the divine essence and governance."

Both the supposed empty-throne problem and Polkinghorne's proposed solution must strike anyone who has grasped the main point of the Council of Chalcedon as peculiar. The required distinction is not between two "poles" within the divine nature, but between the divine nature of Christ, which is eternal, and his human nature, which is temporal. Related confusions lead Polkinghorne to abandon the dogma of divine simplicity. "Trinitarian thinking," he writes, "surely indicates a degree of complexity existing eternally within the divine nature." As traditionally understood, the Trinity does not involve a split *within* the divine nature. Rather, each Person is understood to possess the *whole* divine nature. In Jesus, St. Paul writes, "the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily"—the fullness, not a piece or a pole.

Polkinghorne's Trinitarian theology is not the traditional one, but in the end that may matter little. It is not for his Trinitarian speculations that he is justly honored, but for his powerful and very public witness. His life and writings have given eloquent testimony that one may be both a man of science and a man of God.

Enjoy the Fruits of 800 Years of Dominican Education

Dominican House of Studies

Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception
487 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20017
202-529-5300
www.dhs.edu

Offering Programs in Theology for Clergy and Lay People: M.A., S.T.B., M.Div., S.T.L.

Courses Include:
Life and Works of Thomas Aquinas; Synoptic Gospels; Thomistic Seminar; Capital Sins of the 21st Century; Introduction to Eastern Canon Law.

EVENING CLASSES ARE OFFERED ATS/MSA ACCREDITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Finished

The Finishing School
By Muriel Spark
Doubleday. 192 pp. $16.95.

Reviewed by Gregory Wolfe

Muriel Spark, Dame of the British Empire, expatriate Scot living in Tuscany, has been practicing her peculiar brand of elegant satire for half a century. Approaching ninety, Spark has just published *The Finishing School*, her twenty-second novel. The new book revisits old territory: the teacher-student relationship at the heart of *The Finishing School* recalls, perhaps deliberately, her early classic, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. The parallel offers readers an opportunity not only to compare the social and psychic changes that have taken place in the years between the two books, but also to look back on her achievement as one of the most fiercely independent writers of our time.

When *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* established her reputation as an original voice in 1961, Spark had already published five novels, including *Memento Mori*, a wickedly funny tale about a group of irascible elderly people who begin receiving anonymous telephone calls reminding them of their mortality. The daughter of a Jewish father and a Presbyterian mother, Spark began her professional life in the publishing business. After a disastrous, short-lived marriage, she converted to the Roman Catholic Church in 1954. Her early patrons included the two most famous British Catholic novelists of the day, Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. As the reigning satirist of his time, Waugh found in the young Scotswoman a kindred spirit, praising her publicly and inscribing one of his books to her: "To Muriel Spark in her prime, from Evelyn Waugh in his decline."

But where Greene and Waugh made Catholicism a central part of their fictional worlds, Spark preferred a far more elliptical approach. In interviews she would give only brief, enigmatic responses to questions about her religious convictions, saying, for example, that she liked to read Cardinal Newman's sermons—for the beauty of their prose style.

The narrator of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, Sandy Stranger, comes as close as any of Spark's characters to providing clues to her Catholic vision. Sandy is one of six girls who come under the influence of the charismatic Miss Brodie. The girls are mesmerized by their teacher's free-spirited individualism in a woodenly conventional society, but things begin to go tragically wrong when the teacher determines that one of the girls should have an affair with one of her colleagues, Teddy Lloyd. In the end, the liberated Miss Brodie turns out to be an insidious tyrant, announcing to the girls: "You are mine." Sandy's awakening to the moral horror that is taking place around her triggers her religious sense. She writes her narrative years after the events took place—and after the experience led her to convert to Catholicism and become a nun.

Sandy's pain and confusion stem from the ascendant liberalism of the period: she bemoans the fact that this permissive culture provides no standards by which she may oppose the utopian and ideological fantasies that drive Miss Brodie. She witnesses a freethinker reveal herself as a totalitarian. In response, Sandy embraces the seemingly restrictive life of a religious in a demanding faith—and finds a modicum of true freedom.

Gregory Wolfe *directs the MFA program in creative writing at Seattle Pacific University and is the editor of the journal* Image.

SAINT LOUIS ABBEY

A Benedictine monastery of Catholic priests and brothers

Is the Lord calling you to join us

- in exploring the mystery of God in prayer;
- in living a common life;
- in the work of teaching or administration in an outstanding college preparatory school for boys, grades 7 through 12?

For information about our Monastic Life ExperienceWeek
Saturday, June 18 - Sunday, June 26, 2005

contact Father Ralph Wright, OSB • Saint Louis Abbey
500 South Mason Road • Saint Louis, MO 63141.
Tel: 1-800-638-1527 or **1-314-434-5774**
E-mail: frralph@priory.org
or
visit our website at **www.stlouisabbey.org**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The tragic and elegiac tone of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* was not a tone that Spark would employ again, or at least not with the same cumulative emotional effect. With the triumph of liberalism in the 1960s, Spark shifted her approach. Rather than creating characters who have explicit qualms about the moral and spiritual condition of the social order, she wrote about a more chaotic world, in a narrative voice that is more detached and aloof. Her irony went deep underground: the moral order that has been left behind can be found only in its absence—the alert reader can only discern the shape of a silhouette.

If there is a distinctive land in which her stories live, it is a place in which various characters attempt to impose personal fictions on the world around them, beginning with themselves. Perhaps that is why so many of her protagonists are would-be artists and writers. Without any true spiritual understanding of their human identity, these characters run around scheming and dreaming with a manic energy that is often appealing, if not admirable. Spark has mastered the art of black comedy: she lures us into just enough sympathy with her anti-heroes that we become implicated in their crimes.

Take, for example, another recent novel, the 2000 *Aiding and Abetting*, based on an actual historical incident. The story begins when a man comes to a Paris psychoanalyst and claims to be Lord Lucan, the British aristocrat who disappeared in the mid-1970s after his wife was brutally murdered. A second patient arrives, also claiming to be Lord Lucan. Then the analyst's own identity comes into question. Like all of Spark's charming rogues, these characters tempt us to believe that perhaps we too could reinvent ourselves and break free from the bonds that tie us down.

IN SPARK'S FICTION, the greatest and most pervasive sin is fraud. To our contemporary minds, that might seem a relatively trivial offense. But in this, Spark is close to Dante, who placed fraud in the circles near the very bottom of hell. Indeed, he devotes more than a third of the *Inferno* to fraud, simple and compound, parading before the pilgrim a host of hypocrites, thieves, counterfeiters, pimps, flatterers, false witnesses, and "sowers of discord," among others. An underlying question in Spark's novels is to what extent art itself may be considered a dangerous lie. When is art the "lie

I Am the Lord Your God

Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments

Carl E. Braaten and Christopher R. Seitz, editors

ISBN 0-8028-2812-4 • 287 pages • paperback • $22.00

"Many people don't want to hear of a God who lays down the law. Most conveniently position themselves between 'It's a free country' in regard to areas where they want latitude and others to be nonjudgmental and 'There ought to be a law,' invoking civil compulsion in areas where they want others to stop what they are doing. These authors, however, take the laws of God as found in the Ten Commandments very seriously as a prophetic message for today. . . . Required reading in every seminary and recommended reading for serious church study groups."

— MAX L. STACKHOUSE

CONTRIBUTORS

- Markus Bockmuehl
- Carl E. Braaten
- William T. Cavanaugh
- David Bentley Hart
- Reinhard Hütter
- Robert W. Jenson
- Gilbert Meilaender
- Thomas C. Oden
- Ephraim Radner
- R. R. Reno
- Christopher R. Seitz
- Philip Turner
- Bernd Wannenwetsch
- Robert Louis Wilken

At your bookstore,
or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com

5033 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that tells the truth" (as Picasso put it) and when is it an act of fraud with dire consequences?

All of these questions are alive in Spark's *The Finishing School.* Rowland Mahler and his wife, Nina Parker, run a somewhat shady institution that offers young people the social and professional skills they need to make their way in twenty-first-century business, diplomacy, and media. College Sunrise is a moveable feast, changing locations in Europe on a regular basis in order to stay just ahead of its creditors. This doesn't seem to bother the students' wealthy parents—at least not those in somewhat shady circumstances of their own. They remain quite happy to fob off their seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds on Rowland and Nina.

But a student named Chris is proving to be something of a problem child. A handsome and supremely confident lad, Chris is hard at work on a historical novel proposing a new interpretation of the murder and intrigue that surrounded Mary, Queen of Scots. Agents, publishers, and film producers show up at College Sunrise, smelling the cash to be collected from a new teen sensation. For Rowland, a man of sensibility and an aspiring novelist in his own right, Chris's cockiness, effortless success, and cavalier attitude toward historical fact are insufferable. The teacher becomes obsessively jealous of his student.

Spark extracts a good deal of comedy out of this updated version of the finishing school. In a more class-conscious era, the finishing school was a place where young ladies would be given training in etiquette, languages, and hospitality. In our more egalitarian and progressive era, College Sunrise offers classes in creative writing, "computer wisdom," and advice on how to be a good employee of the United Nations. In one of what she calls her *comme il faut* classes, Nina counsels future UN workers on how to deal with dangerous animals in the jungle. In the case of charging elephants, "stand still and wave a white handkerchief. This confuses the elephants' legs." To avoid a python, sit down with your back against a tree and spread your legs. "The python will hesitate, not knowing which leg to begin with."

But College Sunrise cannot be compared to the Marcia Blaine School for Girls in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie.* Rowland is not a "born fascist" but a thoroughly postmodern cad, a teacher intimidated by his own student. Instead of writing his novel, Rowland's literary efforts take a post-

THE AQUINAS CENTER FOR THEOLOGICAL RENEWAL

at AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY *is pleased to announce the winner of the inaugural*

Charles Cardinal Journet Prize:

Gregory Rocca, OP

Speaking the Incomprehensible God

(Catholic University of America Press)

The Journet Prize honors the monograph published in any language during the past calendar year that best draws upon St. Thomas Aquinas to engage in contemporary theology, philosophy, or biblical studies. The prize consists of the inscribed medallion and a $500 award.

Now accepting nominations for the

2005 AQUINAS DISSERTATION PRIZE

For details see **www.aquinas.avemaria.edu**.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

modern turn: he abandons his novel in favor of a nonfiction study of his nemesis, Chris. This motif—the story within a story—becomes an endless regression in a postmodern world without a center.

At one point in *The Finishing School*, Rowland is packed off by Nina to a mountain monastery in Switzerland to get over his jealousy. The monastery is recommended to him in this way: "They don't try to convert you, they just give you peace of mind." Given the popularity of what might be called spiritual tourism these days, Spark's irony here might be too deep for most readers to catch. But Chris soon goes off to the monastery in pursuit of Rowland—when he realizes he needs Rowland's raging envy. The two men circle each other hungrily, the ultimate co-dependent pair.

The problem that Spark and all satirists of a postmodern world encounter is that there's no *there* there. Satire is grounded upon a belief in moral and cultural standards. In Spark's lifetime, as those standards have disintegrated, the satirist's job has become almost impossible. Jean Brodie may have been the Hitler of a Scottish girls' school, but Rowland and Chris are simply inane, and Nina is busy looking out for number one. A silhouette only works as a portrait when its outlines are sharp-edged.

In the case of *The Finishing School*, the result is a comedy that has no purchase; it merely devolves into stock clichés, including bedroom farce, complete with French maids and a strapping, highly sexed gardener. Even the misdirected creativity of many Sparkian rogues, which may at least remind us of what could happen if true direction were found, is missing here.

A few critics have somewhat harshly suggested that the elderly Muriel Spark is losing her powers, but perhaps the problem lies deeper than that. The amoral triviality of the postmodern world represented by College Sunrise may be putting satirists out of business.

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies

Announces a Lecture by

Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia

Catholic Higher Education and the Church in the World of the Future: Reflections on the Fortieth Anniversary of *Gaudium et Spes*

Connelly Center, 7:30 P.M., September 26, 2005

Open to All

THE THEOLOGY INSTITUTE

Announces a Conference

The Church and Human Freedom: Forty Years after Vatican II

What is the future of the Catholic Church as an institution for Christian freedom?

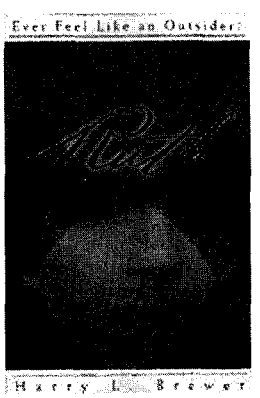
Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.
Andrew Greeley
Francis Schüssler Fiorenza
Ladislas Orsy, S.J.
Leslie Woodcock Tentler
Jeannette Rodriguez
Christopher Bellitto

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2005

To Register Online: www.theology.villanova.edu/institute/ or call 610-519-4730

Is God an exclusivist?
Does He only connect with a few? or
Does He respond to anyone who tries?

Ruth: How an Outsider Gained God's Favor



By Harry L. Brewer

Call: 1-877-421-7323
or go to
www.christianbook.com

Harry, a graduate of Biola University, has taught in home groups with Christian and Jewish believers over the past 20 years. Accuracy, simplicity and insight into the Biblical personalities characterize his writing.

College President - June 2006

The search committee of the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts invites applications and nominations for a successor to its president, who is retiring. Candidates should have an earned Ph.D. and experience in administration and teaching in Catholic liberal arts colleges. Fundraising and some teaching expected. Review of materials will begin March 1st.

For more information, visit: www.thomasmorecollege.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No Longer Neutral

God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America
By Naomi Schaefer Riley
St. Martin's. 288 pp. $24.95.

Reviewed by Ishmael Law

Is there a God on the quad? Does American higher education have any chance of acknowledging, or even accommodating, religion? The young author Naomi Schaefer Riley visited twenty-five American colleges to find out, and her resulting book, *God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America*, is a fascinating study of a moment in American culture.

Riley begins by offering six impressionistic reports on institutions that plausibly claim to be serious about their religious identity and mission: Brigham Young, Bob Jones, Notre Dame, Thomas Aquinas, Yeshiva, and Baylor. *God on the Quad* then offers critical essays on trends she found at these and other colleges, particularly feminism, religious minorities, student life, the integration of faith and learning, and political activism.

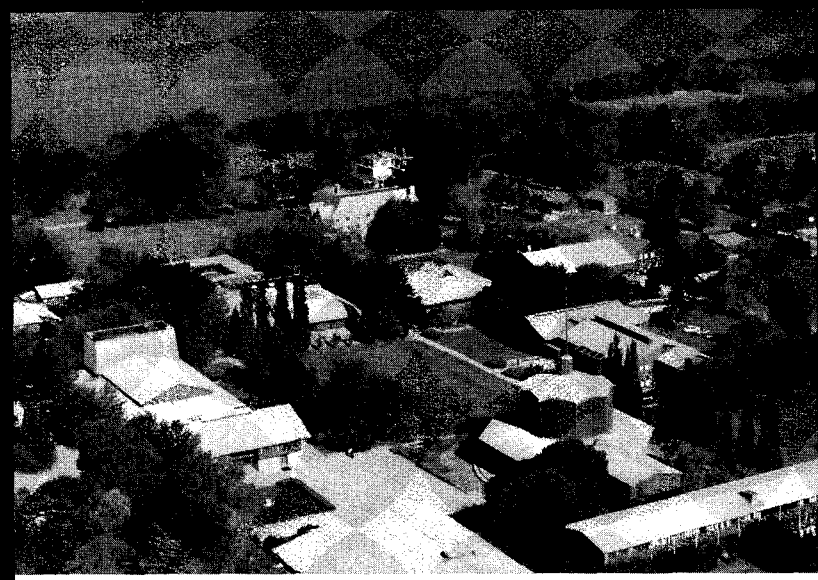
Her campus visits began with four questions: Why had students chosen these schools? How were their curricula different from those of secular schools? What was campus life like outside the classroom? And how would these colleges and universities affect their alumni's later choices?

Riley's ear for character is sharp. A faculty member at Thomas Aquinas, a relatively new conservative Catholic campus, reminisced how he had joined the Church. A statement on abortion by his original Episcopal church "'was so this-worldly and mealy-mouthed; it didn't sound like Christ at all. It sort of disgusted me.' He pauses for a moment, reliving the irritation. 'Here I am telling everybody that Rome and Canterbury are so close and that Anglicanism is just Catholic Christianity for English speaking people. Then when it comes time to speak with the voice of Christ, they speak with the voice of the *New York Times*.'"

Riley's lengthy story of the Yeshiva University in New York City makes a particularly good case study. Yeshiva—where the professional schools in medicine, law, and psy-

Ishmael Law *writes on Catholic theology and education.*

Where are you now? Where are you going?
How will you get there?



The monks of Portsmouth Abbey have found answers to these questions in the Rule of St. Benedict. . . Could this be the answer for you?

We invite you to experience a week of prayer, work, rest, and recreation in our Monastic Life Experience Program for single, college educated, Catholic men, 21-45 years old, who wish to spend some time considering a call to monastic life.

The program will be scheduled to suit you. It is "open-ended", meaning you may spend a few days or a week or more at the abbey. During your stay, you will experience the life of the monk - Ora et Labora - including daily mass, common prayer, *lectio divina*, manual labor, and conferences on monastic history or spirituality. There will be ample opportunity for exercise and rest on our beautiful 550-acres on Narragansett Bay.

The Monastic Life Experience Program is an opportunity to familiarize yourself with monastic life and consider the possibility that ***This Call May Be For You.***

See www.portsmouthabbey.org for information on our Internship Program.
Contact: Dom Ambrose Wolverton, O.S.B.

PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL
285 Cory's Lane Portsmouth, RI 02871 401.683.2000

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chology dwarf Jewish and Hebraic studies—was an institution united ethnically and religiously, held together by a considerable underlay of Talmudic studies shared by a large proportion of the professional student population (whatever their academic majors) and strongly led throughout the past half-century by Solomon Soloveitchik. But when New York legislation in 1969 interdicted the use of the state's generous all-purpose funding by denominational schools, Yeshiva saw no way to survive but to declare itself nondenominational—and then, in the most rigorous, legalistic way, not only to allow students majoring in the other disciplines to drop their formerly required study of Judaica, but to allow the more conservative rabbinical students to minimize their time in humanistic or scientific disciplines, making "Yeshiva an institution at war with itself."

Through her case studies, Riley perceives a broad trend among the educated, including Catholics and Evangelicals, away from the classical male-female roles of wage earner and child rearer. She finds an interesting and probably controversial difference between the choices women were making regarding marriage and career no further back than the 1970s and those they are making now: "As the students I interviewed demonstrate, women at religious colleges are reaching back into the foundations of their faiths for guidance in, and justification for, their decisions," she notes. "The colleges themselves, rather than speeding along a process of secularization or stopping these women from achieving their full potential, are helping them to consider their futures in a more thoughtful manner, one in keeping with their religious beliefs."

As THE BOOK moves on, Riley notices that despite the emphasis placed on affirmative action for racial minorities, there is no assurance that religious fellowship itself might be functioning as a desirable and effective counterforce to segregation. Rather than using religious fellowship as a countervailing loyalty that might draw students together across racial boundaries, "the schools' own acknowledgement that members of a particular ethnic group are best suited to bring its other members into the fold supports secular society's tacit message that only people of the same race can truly understand each other and can therefore communicate best with each other."

Riley's book is well balanced on an issue of great importance on most campuses: the official recognition of homosexual student groups. She sees value in support groups, "but it is a thin line between a group where students can seek guidance and support and an organization that appears to be condoning, if not facilitating through its social events, homosexual behavior." She is notably shrewd about the gambits of educators and institutions that don't want their religious identification to be taken too seriously. The students at such institutions are inclined to see gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, even regional origin, as more significant identifiers (and possibly separators) than their religion. She notes that colleges that take their distinctive religious professions seriously are likely to have more in common with each other than with colleges of the same faith that "have experienced many different levels of secularization."

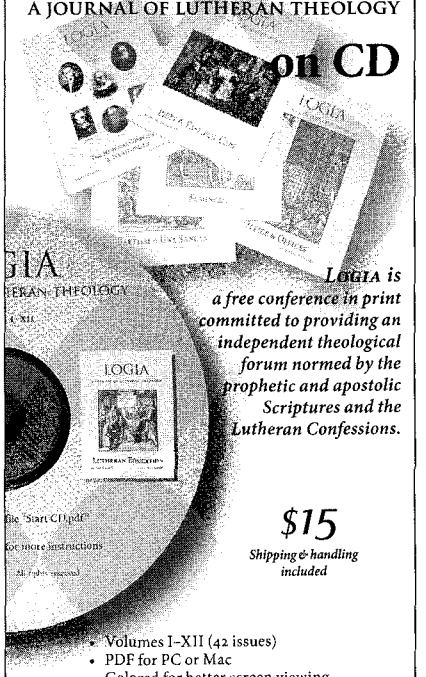
The trend toward generic religion leads one college president to remark

HOW TO PUT FIRST THINGS IN YOUR WILL

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put FIRST THINGS in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. Bequests are free of estate tax, and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government. You can give needed support for FIRST THINGS by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010 (insert amount being given here) to be used to support the ministry of FIRST THINGS.* A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name FIRST THINGS as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living.

It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

LOGIA
A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY
on CD



LOGIA is a free conference in print committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

$15
Shipping & handling included

- Volumes I–XII (42 issues)
- PDF for PC or Mac
- Colored for better screen viewing
- Linked—including endnotes—and bookmarked
- Indexed for simple and advanced searches

To order, include name, address, phone number and payment by check, money order or Visa/MasterCard.

Phone ✣ 605-887-3145
E-mail ✣ logia2@nvc.net
Fax ✣ 605-887-3129
Mail ✣ 15825 373rd Ave., Northville, SD 57465
Visit our web site at **www logia.org**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that "Christian universities, like Christian individuals, are not Christians in general. At least not for long." Ironically, says Riley, "a policy of mere 'tolerance' (understood as neutrality) can engender an intolerance of the religious perspective itself." She goes so far as to observe that "at a few of these schools, like Notre Dame and Yeshiva, the students represent the most spiritually interested and morally serious element of the school."

Readers may find the book's occasional sloppiness distracting. Many small typos and solecisms are lazily neglected. They are a minor matter in themselves, of course, but they could have been easily caught—and so they should have been, for continual sloppiness in the editing suggests to the reader a sloppiness in the writing. Nonetheless, *God on the Quad* is a thoughtful and critical book that reminds readers of how much is lost when religious colleges and universities forfeit their prophetic independence. It is hard to restore such independence once it is gone. But books like this one may make it easier.

Rehabilitating Truth

Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions.
By Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Ignatius. 290 pp. $15.95.

Reviewed by Paul J. Griffiths

May a religion other than Christianity serve as a means of salvation? May salvation be separated from the work of Jesus Christ? What may properly be said about faithful non-Christians' relation to God? How does the Church's demand for evangelization of non-Christians square with its demand for serious dialogue among religions? What is the meaning of interreligious prayer?

In *Truth and Tolerance*, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has gathered thirteen of his previously published essays on these vexed questions in the theology of religions. Mostly from the 1990s, with Ratzinger's more recent comments and elaborations added, the essays are a clear, cogent, and historically learned restatement of fundamental orthodoxy on the questions raised by religious diversity.

The decade from 1992 to 2002 was one in which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—and hence also its prefect—gave a good deal of public attention to the theology of religions. There were a number of theologians providing unorthodox answers to the questions of religious diversity, and correcting them played much the same role in the work of the congregation in these years as correcting the work of some liberation theologians had done in the two preceding decades.

And then, in 2000, the declaration *Dominus Iesus* was proclaimed by the congregation with the pope's ratification *certa scientia et auctoritate sua apostolica* (which is to say with his certain knowledge and apostolic authority, which makes it for Catholics a weighty document). Its central concern—and there seems little doubt that Ratzinger had more of a hand in its composition than anyone else—was exactly to refute inappropriately pluralistic theologies with a robust statement of the central claims of christological and ecclesio-

Paul J. Griffiths *is Schmitt Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His latest book is* Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity *(Brazos).*

"Each sphere of the temporal order, illumined by the principles of Catholic social thought"

The Society of Catholic Social Scientists

- We invite submissions to our peer-reviewed journal, the *Catholic Social Science Review*.
- We announce our 13th Annual Meeting, Oct. 28-29, 2005, to be held at Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio. Join us and consider giving a paper (proposals due June 1).
- We invite you to visit **www.catholicsocialscientists.org** for further information.

The Society, through its journal, annual meeting, and other activities, works to faithfully apply the principles of Catholic social thought in the context of all applicable academic disciplines.

First Annual Thomas More Conference
4-6 November 2005
- Approved for 10.5 CLE credits
- Call for Papers
- Featuring Leading More Scholars

www.thomasmorestudies.org
ctms@udallas.edu • 972-265-5741
University of Dallas

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

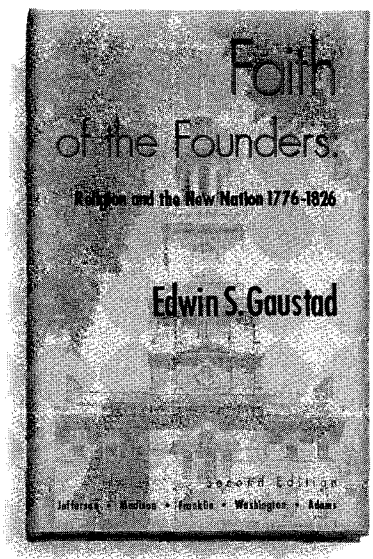
logical orthodoxy: the unique and complete salvific significance of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Jesus; the close unity of the salvific work of the incarnate Logos with that of the Holy Spirit; the profound intimacy between the Church of Christ and the visible and hierarchically ordered Catholic Church in full communion with the Bishop of Rome; and the necessity of preserving both the Church's evangelical mission to bring the gospel to all and its imperative to engage in serious dialogue with the religious other.

The promulgation of *Dominus Iesus* was met, as Cardinal Ratzinger notes in *Truth and Tolerance*, with a "cry of outrage from modern society, but also from great non-Christian cultures such as India: This was said to be a document of intolerance and of a religious arrogance that should have no more place in the world of today." There was also (and this is not discussed in the book) criticism of *Dominus Iesus* from within the hierarchy. At least two cardinals, Edward Cassidy, then president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Walter Kasper, the current president, publicly distanced themselves in strong terms from the document.

The controversy, which continues, centered around three issues. The first was the declaration's strong—in the eyes of some, hectoring and triumphalist—language. The second was the effect on intra-Christian ecumenism, for even though this was not the document's major concern, enough was said to make it seem that the pope's demonstrated concern for Christian unity was being undercut. And the third was the question of whether *Dominus Iesus* (and by extension Cardinal Ratzinger) meant to apply its strictures to the Jewish people and their unbroken covenant with God.

Given this tense and conflicted context, this collection of Ratzinger's work—which was published in German and Italian in 2003 and now appears in English—is timely and important. It holds to the line of *Dominus Iesus*, but the more relaxed and expansive form of a discursive theological essay (not that Ratzinger's style should exactly be described as relaxed) makes clear what is at issue between Ratzinger and the critics of *Dominus Iesus*.

The first fundamental point argued for by Ratzinger is that a dispassionate investigation of the world's religions reveals a fundamental difference between religions that



ISBN 1-932792-09-0 | $24.95
6 x 9, 205 pages | Paper

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY PRESS
New for Spring 2005

Faith of the Founders

Religion and the New Nation 1776-1826

EDWIN S. GAUSTAD

Emeritus Professor of History, University of California, Riverside

As clear and serene a guide to the mixture of religious and political events at the time of the nation's founding as we are likely to get.
–MARTIN MARTY

Gaustad brings to these sensitive chapters all the wisdom and sophistication that have marked him as a premier historian of the American religious experience.
–HENRY W. BOWDEN

Faith of the Founders *is the best summary available of the social, political, and intellectual context that surrounded the crafting of our charter documents.*
–RANDALL BALMER

baylorpress.com | 1.800.710.3217

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

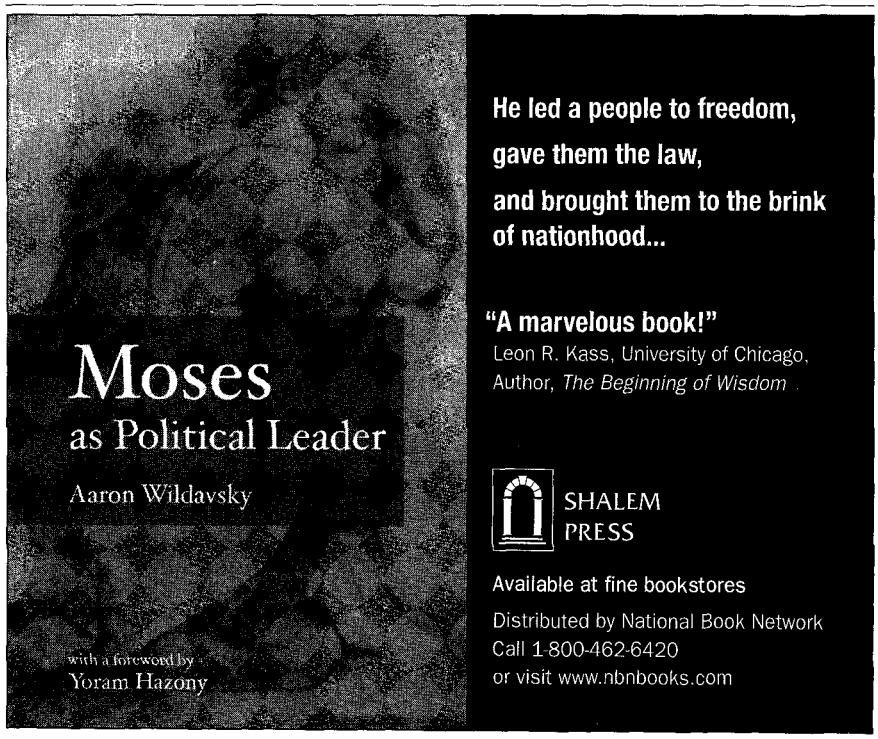
offer a "mysticism of identity" and those that advocate a "personal understanding of God." Ratzinger tends too easily to identify religions of the former type with those of Asia, especially Hinduism. This is dubious, descriptively and historically: Many Hindus have had what Ratzinger means by a personal understanding of God, and at least some Christians, Jews, and Muslims have lacked it. But the distinction itself is a powerful one and serves well Ratzinger's purpose of emphasizing difference and underscoring distinction: All religions do not commend the same goal or offer the same understanding of God and the human; and it is among the tendencies of those who advocate religious pluralism to obscure this.

Ratzinger's way of explaining the distinctiveness of Christianity is subtle, precise, and attuned—as one would expect from a man with so much knowledge of the patristic heritage—to the figural and typological understandings of history and scripture that formed the conventional wisdom of the Church Fathers. Christianity's distinctiveness does not enter history as an unanticipated bolt from the empyrean. Nor does it simply abolish or lay waste the religions and cultures of the world. Rather, its principal and fullest presence in the world as the institutional form of the Church, Christ's body, provides those who do not yet know the Church with the lure of a fuller and richer understanding of what they already know, both religiously and culturally. The Christian offer of conversion, then, is an offer that brings with it a culturally and religiously distinctive fulfillment of cultures as they existed before conversion.

There is an important implication in this way of approaching the question, of which Ratzinger is quite aware. Christianity's relation to various religions is neither logically nor practically different from its relation to various cultures—which is to say that the category "religion" loses much of its usefulness. The Church should address Buddhists, Marxists, secular hedonists, and neo-Stoics in the same voice and with the same attitudes: as a humble but confident offerer of an unsurpassable gift—and at the same time as a sincere and eager listener. These two attitudes are those of proclamation and dialogue, and they are inextricably linked in Ratzinger's thought, as they are also in the documents of Vatican II. The only partial exceptions are the conversations with those groups to whom the Church is self-consciously already intimately related by family ties—that is to say to the Jewish people, and (perhaps) to Muslims. Ratzinger notes this difference, too, but says little about either Jews or Muslims in these essays.

In the second half of the book Ratzinger turns from the question of religions to the question of religious truth. If God is triune, if Jesus of Nazareth was the second person of the Holy Trinity, and if the Catholic Church (tattered and stained, now as always) is the institution in which Christ's Church subsists—if all these things are true, then the positions rejected in *Dominus Iesus* must be false.

But Ratzinger is also concerned with broader philosophical difficulties about skepticism and relativism. He discusses at some length the connection of relativism with the rejection of the very idea of truth as correspondence of the knowing intellect to its known objects, and he analyzes the connection of skepticism with the idea that it is impossible to know which religion is true even if one were. He does this in part through an analysis of the pope's 1998 encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, which he describes as concerned above all with the rehabilitation of truth "in a world characterized by relativism." But he does it also by way of an interesting engagement with recent scholarship on Christianity's rivals in the Roman world of late antiquity. Much of this scholarship suggests, he thinks, that the Emperor Julian's attempted revival of state-sponsored paganism at the end of the fourth century—like the anti-Christian theorizing of such late Hellenistic neoplatonists as Por-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

phyry—took threads from earlier, pre-Christian skepticism and self-consciously wove them together with a newer relativism about *religio* (which for them meant cult, the practice of worship).

That is very like the situation we face today, but Ratzinger does not think that we can simply adopt, say, St. Augustine's response to neoplatonism. He recognizes that for us today—as for our fourth- and fifth-century forebears—argument in favor of the Christian affirmation of the fundamental comprehensibility and rationality of the world will no longer carry conviction to Christianity's cultured despisers. This appears correct—and importantly so. But it needs to be held together with Ratzinger's equally strong affirmation of Christianity's truth. The world is accessible to human rationality because of the nature of its creator and redeemer. Faced with the Christian claim—with good arguments in support of it, for that matter—many will deny it. This interesting fact holds the key to at least some elements of the complex of questions raised by religious diversity.

Ratzinger's interpretation of Wittgenstein's views on religion are unconvincing, and many of his particular statements about Buddhism and Hinduism are marked by a superficiality and generality he would himself criticize in comparable remarks about Christianity. But these are matters that do not affect the merits of the work as a whole, which are great. *Truth and Tolerance* provides transparently lucid guidelines for the recognition of when orthodoxy has been abandoned. It rightly identifies the main intellectual and social pressures issuing in such abandonment.

As is often the case with Ratzinger's works of recent years, there breathes through the book a passionate love for the Church and a hope for her flourishing. This is not the work of a doctrinal policeman; it is, rather, the work of a learned and compassionate pastor. *Truth and Tolerance* will not convince everyone, of course. By its own lights it should not expect to. But it is an important contribution to the debate, both at the theological and philosophical level.

A Journal
CATHOLIC EDUCATION
of Inquiry and Practice

As the only scholarly publication dedicated exclusively to Catholic education, the journal is a must-read for teachers, administrators, pastors, and diocesan staff!

The journal regularly publishes Church documents on education, essays and commentaries from Vatican officials, and various episcopal statements on Catholic education.

For subscription information, please contact:
jwernick@nd.edu
574/631-9996

Catholic Education is supported by seventeen Catholic universities and housed at the University of Notre Dame.
Please visit our website at http://ace.nd.edu/CatholicEducation

BRIEFLY NOTED

DIVORCING MARRIAGE: UNVEILING THE DANGERS IN CANADA'S NEW SOCIAL EXPERIMENT.
Edited by DANIEL CERE & DOUGLAS FARROW.
McGill-Queen's University Press. 208 pp. $22.95 paper.

"Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows: 1. This Act may be cited as the Civil Marriage Act. 2. Marriage, for civil purposes, is the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others. 3. It is recognized that officials of religious groups are free to refuse to perform marriages that are not in accordance with their religious beliefs. 4. For greater certainty, a marriage is not void or voidable by reason only that the spouses are of the same sex." These words are the core of a proposed "Civil Marriage Act" written by the Canadian federal government and introduced into Parliament in February 2005. As I write, debate on the bill is beginning, and it is expected to pass. What, then, of this collection by eminent Canadian scholars, published in late 2004? Has the rapidity of events rendered it no more useful than a treatise in favor of shutting the barn door after the horse's departure? No, it remains one of the more cogent, lively, devastating, and withal irenic examinations of the meaning and nature of marriage in response to the homosexual demand for it. As Douglas Farrow writes, "Our decision about the redefinition of marriage is presented as a decision about whether to give a tiny fraction of the population access to an institution from which they have hitherto been barred—a decision of no importance to mar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

riage as such but of importance to Canada's conscience as a nation committed to equality. . . . In fact the decision we must take is a decision about whether or not to abandon marriage, and to reinvent it on the lines dictated by sexual self-interest. These are lines on which the institution cannot possibly sustain itself. In redefining marriage Canada is redefining its own social structure, yet it has no clear idea what that definition entails or where its social experiment will lead." The collection as a whole is well worth reading and should be of great interest to those south of the 49th parallel.

—J.A. Gray

Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver.
By Scott Stossel.
Smithsonian. 704 pp. $32.50.

Scott Stossel, the author of this excellent authorized biography, asks readers to consider what might have happened if Lyndon Johnson had chosen Sargent Shriver, rather than Hubert Humphrey, as his vice presidential candidate in 1964. Would Shriver, a faithful Catholic, have been in a better position to effect the next decade's realignments within the Democratic Party? Shriver was born in 1915 to a French-German family whose ancestors had arrived in Maryland in the early eighteenth century. Sarge's parents were both Shrivers—they were second cousins, in fact—but their backgrounds were nonetheless very different. Sarge's father, Robert Shriver, was a Republican Protestant, while his mother, Hilda, was Democratic and Catholic. The family had built a modest fortune on manufacturing and banking, and they were able to send Sarge to the best schools: first, the lay-run Catholic Canterbury School, where he first met his future brother-in-law John F. Kennedy, and later Yale, where he studied as both an undergraduate and as a law school student. After his combat service with the Navy in the Pacific theater of World War II, he worked briefly as a journalist in New York. There he met Joseph P. Kennedy, for whom he went to work at the Kennedy family's business in Chicago. After a long courtship, he married Kennedy's daughter Eunice in 1953. The rest of the book chronicles Shriver's long life of government service, a life which is exceptional in its breadth of accomplishment. He was the founder of the Peace Corps under Kennedy, led various government programs as the head of Johnson's War on Poverty, and served as Ambassador to France, where he became a friend of Charles de Gaulle. After leaving government service, Shriver became a partner at a prominent Washington law firm. Until fairly recently, he showed up every weekday at the office of the Special Olympics, which he and his wife founded. And during all this time, the couple also raised five children, who continue the family tradition of public service and dedication to philanthropy. The book explores Shriver's complicated relationship to the Kennedy family; he remained loyal to the Kennedys even when it could have cost him a political office. Shriver's story is a useful reminder of how strong Christian convictions can be brought to bear on difficult political debates, and of the frequent tensions between private honor and political achievement.

—C. John McCloskey

Purity of Heart: Reflections on Love and Lust.
By Sam Torode.
Philokalia. 86 pp. $13.95.

The second of four little books presenting John Paul II's "theology of the body" as set forth in his Wednesday audiences from 1979 to 1984 and here "adapted into everyday English." The introduction by Christopher West—whose books and talks have done much to popularize this teaching—underscores that this fully ecumenical understanding of sexuality is less about following the rules than about discover-

"Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, and Evolution"

A conference to celebrate and revisit Teilhard's vision on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death.

Saturday, May 14, 2005
Marist College
Poughkeepsie, New York

Pre-registration is required.
There is no charge for the event.
For more information call (845) 575-3359
or visit www.marist.edu/news/dechardin.html

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing the freedom of living in the truth, especially freedom from the myriad strategies of lust.

THE DIVINE VOICE: CHRISTIAN PROCLAMATION AND THE THEOLOGY OF SOUND.
By STEPHEN H. WEBB.
Brazos. 256 pp. $24.99 paper.

Webb, the author of *American Providence*, a groundbreaking study of the idea of divine guidance in American history (see FT, February 2005), here undertakes a different task of discernment, searching for the ways in which sound and sounds disclose the voice of God. To say this is a study in the phenomenology of sound or "acoustemology" may be off-putting to both the speakers and the hearers of the Word. There is something less academic and more urgent at stake here. Webb invites those who have been given the job of preaching to adventure into the mysteries of what it is too easy to do routinely. Alertness to sound, he suggests, prepares us for heaven where "our voices will no longer be carried along by vibrations but instead will travel at the speed of grace." *The Divine Voice* is winsome and provocative, leaving the reader with a haunting sense of wonder in the ordinary.

THE BEST AMERICAN SPIRITUAL WRITING: 2004.
Edited by PHILIP ZALESKI.
Houghton Mifflin. 304 pp. $14 paper.

Philip Zaleski, a contributor to this journal, notes that many aspire to being "spiritual writers" but are not sufficiently alert to the possibility that they are taking their souls, and the souls of others, in hand. The term "spirituality," once used almost exclusively by Catholics, has over recent decades become pervasive and muddled. Zaleski's judicious selections from a wide range of sources inclines one to believe that it is perhaps the unavoidable term for a genre of writing that engages the high risks of the soul's salvation.

CHRIST AND APOLLO: THE DIMENSIONS OF THE LITERARY IMAGINATION.
By WILLIAM F. LYNCH.
ISI. 371 pp. $15 paper.

Flannery O'Connor praised this study when it was first published in 1960, and little wonder, since her work so powerfully exemplifies Lynch's insistence upon embodiment, finitude, and the adventure of limitation in literature. Dante, Shakespeare, Proust, Eliot, Greene, Trilling, and a host of others are examined with reference to their choice between Apollonian escape from particularity and the ever-so-particular reality of incarnation. Lynch's argument did not carry the day in literary studies, but it is very much worth reading with a mind open to the possibility that its time may yet come.

A PASSIONATE PILGRIM: A BIOGRAPHY OF BISHOP JAMES A. PIKE.
By DAVID M. ROBERTSON.
Knopf. 304 pp. $24.95.

Bishop Pike, who died in the Judean wilderness in 1969, is not much remembered today, but he was for years one of the most publicized religious leaders in the country. Pike had been Dean of St. John the Divine in New York and then Bishop of California. His death mooted an item on the agenda of the Episcopal bishops who were at the time meeting on the campus of Notre Dame University: it would not be necessary after all to

Prepare for the New Evangelization

Enroll in the first STL of its kind in the U.S.

Embrace the Holy Father's vision for a "New Evangelization" by enrolling in Sacred Heart Major Seminary's new **Licentiate in Sacred Theology** (STL).

- First STL that specializes in pastoral theology focused on the New Evangelization
- For the entire Body of Christ: Priests, religious, laity
- Contemporary cultural analysis, theology and spirituality
- Internationally recognized faculty
- **MA Theology/MA Pastoral Studies** concentrations in the New Evangelization
- Financial aid and housing available

These innovative programs prepare highly trained graduates to lead efforts in evangelization in a parish or diocese, or in a teaching ministry.

SACRED HEART MAJOR SEMINARY
2701 Chicago Boulevard
Detroit, Michigan 48206

Call for an information pack 313-883-8520
Learn more at www.shmsonline.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vote on officially declaring him no longer a bishop. His 1960s books, *A Time for Candor* and *If This Be Heresy*, along with his quick one-liners advocating "fewer beliefs, more belief," had made Pike a media favorite. After a while, his role as religious maverick and bad boy began to wear thin. Three marriages, an uncounted number of affairs, the suicide of a son, excursions into bizarre regions of spiritualism, and the abandonment of identifiably Christian belief had all taken their toll. Robertson's very readable biography is, all in all, sympathetically critical—certainly more critical than the 1976 account by William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, *The Death and Life of Bishop Pike*. One has to wonder, however, if there is today an audience for a book about James Pike. Perhaps there is, among those who remember him fondly, among students of religious liberalism, and among those who see him as a precursor of Episcopalianism's turn toward the wilderness.

Our Lady and the Church.
By Hugo Rahner, S.J.
Zaccheus. 152 pp. $10.95 paper.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger calls this little book, first published in 1961, "one of the most important theological rediscoveries of the twentieth century." Avery Cardinal Dulles concurs. It helps to remember that, leading up to the Second Vatican Council, there was a powerful revival of Marian piety, reflected in and reinforced by the 1950 definition of Mary's bodily assumption, and also a theological resurgence of ecclesiology. These two developments seemed to some to be on a collision course. At the Council, there was strong support for a separate document on Mary, but it was finally decided to fold the reflection on Mary into the constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. It is in that context that one appreciates the importance of Hugo Rahner's study, which draws upon the early fathers of the Church and their understanding that Mary and the Church are one. Again and again—in systematic treatises, homilies, and poetry—the patristic literature asserts that Mary is the Church and the Church is Mary, both "giving birth to Christ" in the lives of the faithful. St. Augustine plays a particularly prominent part in Rahner's account. In its historical context and for the continuing life of the Church, this is an extraordinarily instructive book that well deserves the new life given it by the small Zaccheus Press of Bethesda, Maryland.

THE CORNERSTONE FORUM
Keeping Faith & Breaking Ground
"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

GIL BAILIE,
Cornerstone Forum founder and president and author of
Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads,
places the Gospel back at the center of our concern, insisting that it is the driving force in human history.

Workshops, Parish Missions, Retreats, & Faith Explorations by Gil Bailie
Traditional — Faithful — Spiritually Renewing
Themes Including:
EASTER IN THE MEANTIME:
The History of Hope and the Hope of History
CHANGING THE SUBJECT FROM "SELF" TO "PERSON"
From a Psychological to a Sacramental Understanding of Who We Are

Contact: Randy Coleman-Riese, Executive Director
Post Office Box 9249 • Santa Rosa, CA 95405 • 707-996-4704
Email: randy@cornerstone-forum.org
www.cornerstone-forum.org

Light the Path to Holiness . . .

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY
Institute for Pastoral Theology
Master of Theological Studies
A Graduate Program in Pastoral Theology, Rooted in the Catholic Tradition, & Designed for the Non-Traditional Student

Our Commitment:
- Theological Education – Formation of Mind
- Spiritual Formation – Conversion of Heart
- Pastoral Orientation – Prudential Wisdom

Format:
- One weekend a month
- August – May
- Three-year cycle

Now Accepting Applications through May 16 for classes at these sites:
St. Louis, MO – Naples, FL – Green Bay, WI

1025 Commons Circle, Naples, FL 34119
Toll Free: 866-866-1100 Fax: 239-280-2527
Email: ipt@avemaria.edu Web: www.ipt.avemaria.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING

When the much-celebrated architect Philip Johnson died this year at age ninety-eight the obituaries made little or no mention of his politics. In the days following, some commentators took note of this glaring omission. To be more precise, the omission was glaring only to those who remembered his politics. The worlds pertinent to supporting his celebrity status had long since decided to forget. Johnson was an enthusiastic backer of Hitler. In the 1930s he tried to organize a pro-Hitler fascist party in this country. He published a rave review of *Mein Kampf*, and he was part of the cheering crowds at the 1938 and 1939 Nuremberg rallies. He followed German troops invading Poland and watched the burning of Warsaw. "It was a stirring spectacle," he wrote. Being rich and famous, some might infer, means never having to say you're sorry. When on rare occasions his sordid past was mentioned, Johnson observed that he was also criticized for some of his artistic flirtations and would say with an impish smile that he had always been a "whore." I am told his admirers found this charming. He was a whore, but he was their whore.

Others have been treated very differently. In 1986, Kurt Waldheim, former UN general secretary, was treated as a nonperson when it was discovered he had served in the Nazi SS. Charles Lindbergh, at one time perhaps the most admired man in America, was destroyed by his "America First" effort to keep the country out of World War II. After the war, Martin Heidegger was permanently denied an academic post for his collaboration with the Nazis. Ezra Pound was locked up for years in St. Elizabeths mental hospital in Washington for his wartime broadcasts on behalf of Mussolini. And of course the witless young Prince Harry was excoriated in headlines around the world a while back when he thought it clever to show up at a party dressed as a soldier of the Afrika Korps, complete with swastika. There is also the case of Herbert von Karajan who never apologized for his Nazi past yet continued, until his death in 1989, to be the honored conductor of orchestras in all the great halls of the world. And Leni Riefenstahl, the gifted filmmaker and Hitler propagandist, was honored at the 2004 Academy Awards for her lifetime achievements.

How does one explain the dramatically different treatment of people guilty of similar offenses? Columnist Ann Applebaum, who is also author of a remarkable book on Soviet oppression, *Gulag* (see FT, November 2003), writes: "In the end, I suspect the explanation is simple: People whose gifts lie in esoteric fields get a pass that others don't. Or, to put it differently, if you use crude language and wear a swastika, you're a pariah. But if you make up a complex, witty persona, use irony and jokes to brush off hard questions, and construct an elaborate philosophy to obfuscate your past, then you're an elder statesman, a trendsetter, a provocateur and—most tantalizingly—an enigma." That is no doubt a large part of it, although Pound was punished, as was Heidegger, albeit more mildly, and their gifts were undoubtedly "in esoteric fields." But their punishment was in the immediate aftermath of "the last good war," when the line between good and evil seemed less ambiguous.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The erratic course of forgetting and remembering, of absolving and punishing, can also be explained by reference to another tyranny and those who supported it. In our culture-commanding institutions today, including the leadership of the once influential old-line churches, there are thousands upon thousands who enthusiastically backed Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Castro, and others whose victims number in the many millions. After the fall of Saigon in April, 1975, hundreds of thousands of "boat people" fled to their death at sea, while hundreds of thousands of others were driven into reeducation camps, in many cases never to be heard from again. I had been a leader in the "peace movement"—the quotes are now necessary and maybe were then—and helped organize a protest against the brutality of the Hanoi regime. We asked 104 movement leaders to sign the protest and the split was almost exactly even. Those refusing to sign subscribed to the doctrine of "no criticism to the left." No matter what they did, leftist regimes represented the historical dynamic of progress; they were the wave of the future and therefore above any criticism that might slow their course. It was a pity about the victims, but most of them probably deserved it, and, anyway, "you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs."

There are things not to be forgotten. At the height of Mao's cultural revolution in which as many as thirty million died, the National Council of Churches published a booklet hailing China as an admirably "Christian" society. In 1981, *60 Minutes* did an hour-long program on the National Council of Churches' support for Marxist causes, and I spoke with Morley Safer about religious leaders who had become "apologists for oppression." That was the end of some important friendships, or at least I thought they were friends. I was then a much younger man, learning slowly and painfully what many had learned before. Allegiance to the left, however variously defined, was a religion, and dissent was punished by excommunication. There was for a long time no romance so blinding as that with the Soviet Union. Malcolm Muggeridge wrote witheringly about Lenin's "useful idiots"—Western progressives on pilgrimage to the Soviet Union, from which they returned with glowing accounts of "the future that works." There was also Whittaker Chambers' *Witness*, Robert Conquest's *The Great Terror*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*—all of them dismissed as right-wing propaganda. To be sure, there were those who had a change of mind, and even instances of something like public penance. In a famously lucid moment, the late Susan Sontag shocked a Town Hall audience by saying that the readers of *Reader's Digest* had a better understanding of Communism than did readers of the *New York Review of Books*. Much earlier, William F. Buckley had launched *National Review* with the help of apostates from "the god that failed." Yet up to the present the hard left, not so reduced in numbers and influence as some claim, is enraptured; not usually by Communism but by a Marxian analysis of oppression and imperialism joined to a more or less consistent anti-Americanism.

Yes, Philip Johnson should have apologized for his repugnant politics, and because he didn't he should have paid the price of being denied the fame and wealth so uncritically bestowed. But it is almost too easy to excoriate, hunt down, and punish the remaining collaborators with Hitler. That was a long time ago, and they are very old now. Not so with the unrepentant apologists for oppression from the Old Left, the New Left, the Maoists, the cheerleaders for the Sandinistas, and those who make slight effort to disguise their hope for America's defeat in the war on terror. In many instances they hold positions of influence on the commanding heights of culture. There may not be much that can be done about our circumstance. Nobody should want to revisit the experience of the House committee on un-American activities. And it is impossible to imagine something like South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was set up after the end of apartheid, since with the great divide in our society and its politics there is no end in sight. We have to try to get along with one another as best we can, keeping our disagreements within the bounds of civility. But, as was not done in the case of Philip Johnson, we should remember.

FT

DIRTY JOKES AND FREEDOM IN AMERICA

Two years ago Frank Rich was moved from his op-ed column to a space in the Sunday Arts & Leisure section of the *New York Times*, and that was generally taken to be a demotion. Insiders said his one-note snarl and sneer was just too much on a page that also features Maureen Dowd, the mistress of the manner. But in March it was announced that Rich is back on the Sunday op-ed pages (there are now two of them). I admit to checking out Frank Rich's columns from time to time, just to see what has sparked the latest snit. His reactions are old reliables most reliably outraged by the nefarious doings of the oppressive prudery of the mindlessly homophobic religious right.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Today's column by Mr. Rich is entitled "The Greatest Dirty Joke Ever Told," and it rails against the censors of the right who are enlisting the government to restrain pornography and related smut on television. He is further appalled by the decision of PBS to delete profanity from a documentary on American soldiers in Iraq. The First Amendment is on the ropes as the religious ayatollahs have taken control of the Bush administration's assault on the artistic expression of real life. This is very serious. The freedom Mr. Rich is defending is represented by the aforementioned great dirty joke he heard at a Friars Club roast. A family comes to a talent agent who asks them what kind of act they do. Mr. Rich writes, "What followed was a marathon description of a vaudeville routine featuring incest, bestiality, and almost every conceivable body function. The agent asks the couple the name of their unusual act, and their answer is the punch line: 'The Aristocrats.'"

The joke as it was actually told, Mr. Rich assures us, is hilarious, and he complains about the current Comstockery that forced its omission from the television broadcast of the Friars roast. But why doesn't Mr. Rich give us the "marathon description" that made the joke so funny? The obvious answer is that the *Times* would not publish it, and the *Times* pays Mr. Rich's large salary. Mr. Rich does not complain about being censored. Presumably the *Times* does not publish what he thinks should be broadcast to the general public because it would offend its readers and hurt advertising sales, which is the business the *Times* is in. Unless, of course, the *Times* has been taken over by the religious right, which seems improbable. Neither, for that matter, did the *Times*, in its story on the PBS documentary, tell us what had been cut. Mr. Rich and other free-speech zealots do not complain about being censored or having to practice self-censorship by resorting to euphemism and evasion in their own writing. That is required by the discreet "respectability" of the *Times* and is in no way to be compared with the oppressive "decency" that concerns those religious fanatics.

The readers of the *Times* are properly protected from the smut that, in the name of the First Amendment, should be thrown in the face of the booboisie that is the general public. I do not say that Mr. Rich is a hypocrite. Hypocrisy, properly speaking, requires a certain clarity of thought in feigning to be or to believe what one is not or does not believe. I have no doubt that Mr. Rich is sincere, which requires no clarity of thought whatever. He has a job to protect and he plays by the rules. Perhaps he dreams that one day, just maybe, he will manage to smuggle the f-word into a column. In the journalism of arrested adolescence, that would be to die and go to heaven. Absent that great achievement, Frank Rich will play by the rules, among the chief of which is to pander to the felt sense of moral superiority among readers who share his contempt for the insufferable decency of fellow-citizens who consent to the oppression of being denied the dirty jokes that Mr. Rich will not tell. Those to whom he panders are similarly denied, of course, but that is a small price to pay for reading a really respectable newspaper. Such respectability, once again, is in no way to be confused with the right-wing decency-mongering that has all but destroyed freedom in America. This is very serious.

FT

WHERE HAVE ALL THE CHILDREN GONE?

We have referred frequently to the dramatic decline in population around the world. The following excerpt from Life Insight *provides an informative overview of what is happening:*

Recently the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) hosted the "Countdown 2015 Global Roundtable" in London. Its goal was to assess progress in curbing world population growth through universal access to "reproductive health care" since the 1994 UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

Although the Cairo Conference explicitly rejected abortion as a "method of family planning," groups like IPPF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have never retreated from their aggressive advocacy of a universal "right" to abortion on demand. And the Conference's final "Programme of Action" was bad enough: promoting universal access to artificial birth control and condoning what has been interpreted as a "right" to sexual activity for children aged ten and above. By 2005, wealthy countries were supposed to pony up $6.2 billion annually to achieve these and other Conference goals. They are only halfway toward that goal.

According to some published reports, the London meeting turned into a major gripefest about current U.S. Administration policies: 1) against worldwide abortion on demand; 2) favoring abstinence before, and monogamy in, marriage over condom use to combat AIDS; and 3) refusal to fund UNFPA as long as the organization continues to support China's coercive population program.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tim Wirth, who led the U.S. delegation in Cairo that pushed without let-up to expand abortion "rights" and now heads the pro-abortion U.N. Foundation, complained that "the current administration has placed ideology above evidence and bias above science."

If any side has been blinded by ideological bias, it is surely the folks at Countdown 2015. It's not a secret that fertility rates worldwide have plummeted in the past thirty years. The UN Population Division, numerous respected demographers, economists and social scientists have described this phenomenon in official publications, books, scholarly articles, and the popular press.

Today the only sources which still warn of an impending population explosion are outdated American textbooks and diatribes from population control extremists and abortion ideologues.

Consider the demographic *evidence*: Global fertility rates are 50 percent lower than in 1972—2.9 children per woman, down from six children per woman. They continue to fall at an increasing pace. For population to remain stable, the fertility rate must be 2.1 in nations with relatively low infant mortality and proportionately higher than 2.1 where greater numbers of children die in childhood from communicable diseases or malnutrition.

Philip Longman, author of the new book *The Empty Cradle*, writes in *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2004): "All told, some fifty-nine countries, comprising roughly 44 percent of the world's total population, are currently not producing enough children to avoid population decline, and the phenomenon continues to spread. By 2045, according to the latest UN projections, the world's fertility rate as a whole will have fallen below replacement levels." In *Fewer: How the New Demography of Depopulation Will Shape Our Future*, sociologist Ben Wattenberg states: "Never in the last 650 years, since the time of the Black Plague, have birth and fertility rates fallen so far, so fast, so low, for so long, in so many places."

The average fertility rate in Western Europe is a dismal 1.4 children per woman, ranging from 1.8 in Ireland and France to 1.2 in Italy and Spain. This is what a 1.4 fertility rate means for Germany: "Germany could shed nearly a fifth of its 82.5 million people over the next forty years—roughly the equivalent of all of east Germany, a loss of population not seen in Europe since the Thirty Years' War" which ended in 1748. Western Europe is losing approximately 750,000 people a year.

Economist Robert Wright of Stirling University (Scotland) warns of a "demographic time bomb" because of "a precipitous fall in the fertility rate" in Scotland, now below 1.5 children per woman. The current population of over five million is expected to decrease by more then 20 percent by 2041. A recent survey showed that over 40 percent of highly educated Scotswomen aged forty-five to forty-nine were childless.

President Vladimir Putin calls Russia's population loss of 750,00 people a year a "national crisis." The yearly loss could increase to three million or more by 2050. And it is estimated that "Bulgaria will shrink by 38 percent, Romania by 27 percent, Estonia by 25 percent."

Japan's fertility rate of 1.3 children per woman will soon put the population into absolute decline. According to U.N. estimates, over the next four decades, Japan will lose a quarter of its 127 million people.

China's fertility rate has dropped from 5.8 children per woman to 1.3 (Chinese census data). One scholar writes, "By 2019 or soon after, China's population will peak at 1.5 billion then enter a steep decline. By mid-century, China could well lose 20 to 30 percent of its population every generation."

Despite government incentives to produce more children, the industrialized nations of Asia such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are now at sub-replacement fertility levels.

In Canada's Institute for Research and Public Policy's *Policy Options* magazine (August 2004), the Canadian government is urged to "import" more young people to counter declining fertility rates.

"Mexican fertility rates have dropped so dramatically, the country is now aging five times faster than is the United States. It took fifty years for the American median age to rise just five years, from thirty to thirty-rive. By contrast, between 2000 and 2050, Mexico's median age, according to UN projections, will increase by twenty years, leaving half the population over forty-two" (Philip Longman, "The Global Baby Bust," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004).

Uruguay, Brazil, Cuba and many Caribbean nations are also experiencing sharp declines in birth and fertility rates.

The U.S. fertility rate dropped to a low of 1.7 children per woman in 1975, but rose to 1.99 where it currently is, largely as a result of the slightly higher birthrates among Latino immigrants. However, the population in the U.S. sixty-five years and older is expected to double by 2035.

Why are birthrates plummeting?

To start with, forty-six million abortions occur annually, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute. More or less "effective" artificial contraception and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

widespread sterilization have greatly reduced birthrates, especially in those developing countries where coercion is used to reach population targets. UN data report that 62 percent of women of reproductive age who are married or "in union" are using some form of artificial birth control.

But economic and "lifestyle" factors also can affect a family's decision to have fewer children, for example:

- Migration of families from farming areas—where children's labor benefits the family—to urban centers where there's no immediate economic incentive for having children.
- Women's access to paying jobs in urban areas, and the reality that many have to work to help support the family.
- The continually rising cost of raising children: in the U.S., over $200,000 to age eighteen, excluding college, according to the Department of Agriculture.
- High taxation, reducing the family's disposable income.
- Young people spending more years in higher education to meet the demands of a more highly skilled workforce, which delays the average age of marriage and increases their education debt.
- The later average age of marriage, resulting in lower fertility among women and a shortened period of child-bearing in marriage.
- Divorce.
- Sexually transmitted diseases which can impair fertility are at epidemic levels due to multiple partners.
- Materialism and consumerism, fueled by advertising and television.
- Radical feminist ideology that measures women's worth solely by the acquisition of money and power, and denigrates their contributions to family life.

As demographers examine declining birthrates worldwide, economists are beginning to raise the alarm about what this portends for the future economic health of nations when there will be far fewer workers contributing to the programs which support a growing population of the elderly.

Obviously, the benefits of raising children transcend economics. Children are a source of joy, love and hope.

They transform and sanctify their parents. Our society and our world need to recover an appreciation for the gift of children, whose presence is needed now more than ever.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ I have done dozens of radio and television interviews and have written or helped write obituaries for several national publications, all in anticipation of the death of John Paul II. These are, as one producer remarked, "in the can for the final event." Every time the Pope goes to the hospital, the media "deathwatch," as one network inelegantly termed it, starts up all over again. It was not always this way. As recently as 1967, Paul VI had prostrate surgery in a makeshift operating room set up in the papal apartment, and the world was not told. It was long the custom that no medical reports were issued on a pope, leading to the wry observation that a pope is never officially sick until he is dead. Also in the modern era, it is reliably reported that popes have been incapacitated for months or even years. "So who is running the Church?" it is asked. Well, nobody really "runs" the Church in the sense that a CEO, for instance, is supposed to run a corporation. Traditionally, a pope presides more than he directs. He is not the CEO but the father of the family. The Catholic Church, with 1.1 billion members, is the most decentralized of the world's large institutions. The number of people working in the Vatican is comparable to running the U.S. government with 500 employees. Much has changed, however, with John Paul II. His has been an unprecedentedly public pontificate. Over the years, he has made public appearances several times a week and often daily. When he is sick, he goes to the hospital and detailed medical reports are issued. The very public and active days of this pontificate are winding down. The Holy Father has made it clear that the father of a family does not resign. Curiosity about what happens if he is completely and permanently incapacitated tends toward the macabre. I do not know for sure but expect that arrangements are in place for that possibility. History suggests that the Church can get by for a time without a pope actively in charge. Father Raymond de Souza puts the matter nicely in a column in the *National Post*: "Pope John Paul is aging, deteriorating, and moving closer to his death. He and the Church are entering a period of reflection, contemplation, and prayer. Reflection, contemplation, and prayer are not something to pass the time until the Church can get back to work—they are the work of the Church."

■ At the meeting point between science and moral judgment on matters environmental, Professor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thomas Sieger Derr of Smith College is second to none. He has been studying and writing on these issues for decades, and his work came to mind while reading a big story by Laurie Goodstein in the *New York Times*, "Evangelical Leaders Swing Influence Behind Effort to Combat Global Warming." In our November 2004 issue, Derr concluded his analytical survey of research on global warming and the fears it has aroused with this: "It is clear, then, given the deep roots of the scare, that it is likely to be pretty durable. It has the added advantage of not being readily falsifiable in our lifetimes; only future humans, who will have the perspective of centuries, will know for certain whether the current warming trend is abnormal. In the meantime, the sanest course for us would be to gain what limited perspective we can (remembering the global cooling alarm of a generation ago) and to proceed cautiously. We are going through a scare with many causes, and we need to step back from it, take a long second look at the scientific evidence, and not do anything rash. Though the alarmists claim otherwise, the science concerning global warming is certainly not settled. It is probable that the case for anthropogenic warming will not hold up, and that the earth is behaving as it has for millennia, with natural climate swings that have little to do with human activity." The Rev. Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, has taken a different route in researching the global warming question. Haggard, writes Goodstein, "said he had become passionate about global warming because of his experience scuba diving and observing the effects of rising ocean temperatures and pollution on coral reefs." The Caribbean clime is, some contend, conducive to careful moral reasoning on the way to passionate commitments.

■ The Rev. Rich Cizik, vice president of the National Association of Evangelicals, was led to commitment under the auspices of the Rev. Jim Ball of the Evangelical Environmental Network. Ball, the founder of the "What Would Jesus Drive?" campaign who followed the example of Jesus in driving a hybrid vehicle across the country, got Cizik to attend a global warming conference. The *New York Times* reports: "Mr. Cizik said he had a 'conversion' on climate change so profound that he likened it to an 'altar call,' when nonbelievers accept Jesus as their savior. Mr. Cizik recently bought a Toyota Prius, a hybrid vehicle." The mainline evangelical magazine, *Christianity Today*, eager to demonstrate that evangelicals are "unpredictable" and can embrace liberal causes, has signed on to the global warming cause. The Rev. Ball says his most effective argument in persuading fellow evangelicals is that global warming has a disproportionate effect on poor regions of the world that are most subject to hurricanes, droughts, and floods. One is reminded of the imagined *Washington Post* headline: "New York Destroyed by Nuclear Attack: Women and Minorities Hardest Hit." The Rev. Cizik draws an analogy with abortion: "We try to restrict it. So why, if we're social tinkering to protect the sanctity of human life, ought we not be for a little tinkering to protect the environment?" But of course. Although one might observe that proposals such as the Kyoto treaty on climate change, rejected by the United States and unobserved by nations signing it, mandate more than a little tinkering. But the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is forging ahead. President Haggard says, "The question is, Will evangelicals make a difference, and the answer is, The Senate thinks so. We do represent thirty million people, and we can mobilize them if we have to." He already has nearly a hundred evangelical leaders who have signed a statement saying that "government has an obligation to protect its citizens from the effects of environmental degradation." The laconic Ms. Goodstein observes, "But it is far from certain that a more focused statement on climate change would elicit a similar response." As the *Washington Post* did say, evangelicals are, among other things, "easily led." Apparently the Revs. Haggard, Cizik, and Ball are counting on it. At the NAE convention in March they got a supporting statement, although some evangelical leaders were less than enthusiastic. James Dobson's Focus on the Family promptly announced, "Our friends at the National Association of Evangelicals, with whom we agree on . . . so many other issues, have now staked out a position in the very controversial area of global warming. This is despite the fact that significant disagreement exists within the scientific community regarding the validity of this theory. Our concern with global warming's more radical proponents is the way in which they have attempted to manipulate this issue to stifle advances in numerous fields—advances that would benefit the lives of people the world over, including many of its poorest citizens. Any issue that seems to put plants and animals above humans is one that we cannot support." On a related development: The *Times* notes with satisfaction that the banning of DDT spraying some years ago has succeeded in saving the bald eagle. Regrettably, at the cost of an estimated 100,000 children who have died of malaria.

■ At age sixty-seven, Hunter S. Thompson, author of the pharmaceutically inspired "Fear and Loathing" books, was taking a call from his wife whom he asked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to come home and help him with the writing of a column. In the middle of the conversation, without saying anything out of the ordinary, he put down the phone and fired a .45-caliber bullet into his mouth. "I heard the clicking of the gun," Anita Thompson said. "I was waiting for him to get back on the phone." Hunter's son, daughter-in-law, and six-year-old grandson were a few yards away in adjoining rooms when he killed himself. The *Rocky Mountain News* reported: "Hunter S. Thompson died Sunday as he planned, surrounded by his family, at a high point in his life, and with a single, courageous, and fatal gunshot wound to the head, his son says." The son and daughter-in-law declared they "could not be prouder" of his suicide. The family gathered around the body sitting in the kitchen chair and toasted his achievement with Chivas Regal, Hunter's alcoholic favorite. "It was very loving," said Anita Thompson. "This is a triumph of his, not a desperate, tragic failure." In the days following, numerous writers reminisced about a wild night once spent with Thompson, and generally agreed that his exit was in character. He was really something. Novelist Tom Wolfe declared him the Mark Twain of his century. In the account of the post-suicide kitchen party, the six-year-old grandson is not quoted.

■ Asked whether apocalyptic scenarios about the mass conversion of Jews does not temper his appreciation of evangelical support for Israel, Irving Kristol responded some years ago, "No. It's their theology but it's our Israel." This year thousands of enthusiastic evangelicals met in Anaheim, California, for the annual rally of Christian broadcasters and were addressed by Israeli consul Ehud Danoch, who expressed his country's gratitude for evangelical support, also in keeping up the flow of pilgrims to the Holy Land even during the violent times of the most recent intifada. Asked whether he is not bothered by the convention speeches about the Middle East being bathed in fire as the end time approaches, Mr. Danoch said, "The end of time, it's not something we're looking at."

■ Mixed and somewhat confusing is the way to describe the responses to the February meeting of Anglican primates (heads of the thirty-eight provinces) in Newry, Northern Ireland. Some liberals and conservatives (as I suppose we must designate the parties) said they were pleased, while other liberals and conservatives were deeply disappointed. The issues, of course, have to do with the American consecration of an actively gay bishop and the Canadian blessing of same-sex unions. A number of primates had declared that their churches were no longer in full communion with the churches of the United States and Canada. At the Newry meeting it was unanimously agreed to "request the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada to voluntarily withdraw" from the Anglican Consultative Council for three years, during which time the offending churches should mend their ways or offer a persuasive theological case for their rejection of the communion's teaching on the immorality of homosexual acts. At the start of the Newry meeting, it was agreed that the tradition of daily Eucharist would be dropped. Led by Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria, a number of primates insisted that unity in doctrine must precede unity in the Eucharist. Anglicans are famous for a mastery of ambiguities that facilitates muddling through, but it would seem that the action at Newry is strikingly straightforward. The American and Canadian churches are disinvited from meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council and the primates are not able to participate in the same Eucharist. It is no longer a question of whether communion among the Anglican churches will be broken. The only fair reading of the Newry meeting is that communion has been broken. To be sure, there is a further three-year period for discussion, negotiation, persuasion, and accommodation. But restoring communion would seem to depend on the North American churches repudiating what they have done or convincing the other churches either to follow suit or to agree that what the North Americans have done is not church-dividing after all. These possibilities appear to be extremely improbable. If it is now formally the case that Episcopalians in the United States, along with their counterparts in Canada, are no more than a minor part of liberal old-line Protestantism, that is a great sadness. They once claimed, and their friends may continue to hope, that they are much more than that.

■ It is said that a week in politics can be a lifetime, with setbacks or successes working kaleidoscopic changes, and there is no doubt something to that. But as of this writing, the Bush administration appears to be on a foreign policy roll, and the direction of that roll is in continuity with the decisions made and publicly articulated in the months following September 11, 2001. The dramatic success of the Iraqi elections of January 30 is being hailed, also by formerly harsh critics of the administration, as a "tipping point," with many comparing the moment to the fall of the Berlin Wall. That "purple revolution" (referring to the ink-stained fingers of voters) is joined to the "orange revolution" in Ukraine, and in the minds of many is asso-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ciated with the "red revolution" of last November 3 in the U.S. In his low-key but unmistakably triumphant tour of Europe in February, Bush politely received the grudging acknowledgments of critics that maybe the Americans know what they're doing after all. Add to this the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Lebanon's "cedar revolution" against Syrian control, tentative moves toward a measure of freedom by the dictatorship in Egypt, and a revived "road map" toward peace between Israel and Palestine, and it begins to look something like what a "cowboy president" calls democracy's moment. Not to be overlooked are striking changes at the UN. Secretary General Kofi Annan and the UN itself are under siege as outrage builds over the exposure of widespread mismanagement and corruption in the secretariat, the multi-billion-dollar scandal of the Iraqi oil-for-food scheme, and UN troops in Congo engaged in systematic rape and looting. Only a couple of years ago, the UN seemed to be riding high, presenting itself as the source and guardian of moral legitimacy in international affairs. Even the Vatican seemed to be going along with that pretension. Now UN-boosters such as Richard C. Holbrooke, President Clinton's ambassador to the organization, are much sobered. "The UN cannot stand above its member states," he says. "That's not acceptable to the big powers, and not just the U.S. The Chinese and the Russians and countries like India also won't accept the UN as senior to them." We have not moved beyond the sovereignty of nation states after all. The UN exists and operates at the sufferance of the P5—the five permanent members of the Security Council who have a veto (Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States)—and most particularly of the P1, meaning the United States, which pays the biggest part of the bills and provides the muscle behind UN decisions. World-government enthusiasts, a group largely indistinguishable from the declared opponents of the world's only "hyperpower," have not raised the white flag, and probably never will, but their influence has been sharply curtailed. This is notably the case with the NGOs (non-governmental organizations) that have tried to use the UN to trump national sovereignty by advancing their social agendas through "international law." We are witnessing the shape of a new realism in world affairs. It is not a cynical Realpolitik. Under the leadership of the United States, it is very explicitly moral in purpose, and some complain it is dangerously moralistic. It appears, however, that we are finally being given the answer to the question of what comes after the end of the Cold War. All in all, and as of this writing, it is an answer that is hopeful and increasingly believable.

■ Now that we're well into the 2008 presidential election cycle, which began the day after the 2004 election, among the names being bandied about as possible Republican candidates is that of Mitt Romney, Governor of Massachusetts. Charles Colson recently commended Romney for taking on Harvard by challenging its plans to, in Colson's words, "create human embryos and then turn these tiny human beings into laboratory rats." Proponents of creating, using, and destroying human embryos routinely speak of their interest in helping people with terrible diseases. To which Romney responds: "Respect for human life is a fundamental element of a civilized society. Lofty goals do not justify the creation of life for experimentation or destruction. My wife has multiple sclerosis, and we would love for there to be a cure for her disease and for the diseases of others. But there is an ethical boundary that should not be crossed." Colson writes: "I agree with Romney—and I applaud his courage. At the same time, I'm sorry that he doesn't entirely support the pro-life agenda. His qualifications stem, I believe, from his Mormon faith. Mormon theology leads Mormons to believe that embryos are not alive until they are implanted on the wall of the uterus—an utterly unscientific view, by the way. Governor Romney's approach reminds us that, while Mormons share some beliefs with Christians, they are not Christians; they rely not on the authority of the Bible alone but also on Joseph Smith. I respect Mormons, work with them, and consider them co-belligerents in many causes. But we can't gloss over our fundamental differences." There has been some media interest in whether Romney's Mormonism would deny him the support of evangelical Protestants. I have indicated that I did not think so, not if he is right on the really big questions. Perhaps I'm wrong about that. I do think we have to be careful, however, in saying that Mormons are not Christians. Some while back I offered an extended discussion in this space under the title "Is Mormonism Christian?" (FT, March 2000). My answer was qualifiedly in the negative, and that stirred some lively exchanges. It is not possible, I believe, to square some official Mormon teachings with what is called the Great Tradition of Christian orthodoxy. At the same time, Mormons are very eager to be recognized as fellow-Christians by Christians, and some Mormon scholars are working earnestly to demonstrate the compatibility of Mormonism with historic Christianity. Mormonism came late on the scene, and its effort to demonstrate its Christian bona fides is a still more recent development. So are there Mormons who are Christians? I think so. Is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints a Christian communion?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I think we must answer no. But that may well change over the next fifty or hundred years, by which time I expect to be permanently excused from addressing the very interesting theological questions involved. As for Mitt Romney and 2008, it is only a little too early to be giving the matter serious attention.

■ We are among the many who have been watching with great interest Baylor University's effort to become a top-drawer research university under the all-encompassing lordship of Christ. The vision is called "Baylor 2012" and has been pressed these past ten years by Robert B. Sloan, who has now resigned as president and assumed the title of chancellor, an office without policy-making authority. Sloan's vision was, as they say, controversial from the beginning; most things worth doing are. He says he would not have resigned as president if he were not confident that "Baylor 2012" is secure. The school's governing board insist they stand behind the vision. Some are skeptical, and understandably so. What Sloan proposed is that Baylor could defy the drift into either secularization or academic mediocrity (or both) typical of religiously-affiliated institutions, as documented by scholars such as George Marsden and James Burtchaell. Robert Benne, a Lutheran and close observer of church-related higher education, writes: "Protestants have simply not been able to establish the one thing Sloan has been striving to establish: a first-rate research university that preserves its soul. . . . Sloan's resignation poses a serious question: Do Protestants have enough confidence in the intellectual claims of the Christian faith to make them relevant to the educational life of a great university?" The more hopeful believe that Sloan's fault was to press a course that was too fast and too expensive. "Baylor 2012," they say, will now be implemented in a more-deliberate manner that does not risk excessive destabilization of the school. Benne writes, "There is no guarantee that this ambitious plan will be completely successful or that it will now be free of controversy, but its likelihood of success is now greater without Sloan than it was with him." Everybody concerned about the future of Christian higher education in this country has reason to hope that Benne is right.

■ A reader found this on the Internet, so it must be true. A man in Charlotte, North Carolina, bought a box of very expensive cigars which he insured against fire. Having smoked them, he filed a claim, saying they had been lost "in a series of small fires." The insurance company balked, the case went to court, and the judge ruled in the man's favor, noting that the company did not specify what is an "unacceptable fire." The company was required to pay the fellow $15,000, but then had him arrested on twenty-four counts of arson. He was convicted and sentenced to twenty-four months in jail and a fine of $24,000. If true, it is a sobering tale, confirming me in the wisdom of smoking cigars that are inexpensive and uninsured.

■ Come this time of year and the indomitable Cardinal Newman Society sends out its list of Catholic colleges sponsoring a performance of *The Vagina Monologues*. The performance entails, as I understand it, women getting their kicks by talking as dirty as possible about their sexual fantasies. This year's list included Nazareth College and St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York. Upon investigation, however, it was determined that the Diocese of Rochester no longer recognizes the two schools as Catholic. So they join Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, as schools decertified by the Church. According to the 1990 Vatican document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* ("From the Heart of the Church"), such schools are not to advertise themselves as Catholic, but of course that is not binding in U.S. law. The standard equivocation employed by dubiously Catholic or definitely not Catholic schools is "in the Catholic tradition" or, sometimes, "in the Jesuit tradition." Proceeds from last year's performance of *Monologues* at St. John Fisher went to Planned Parenthood. Fisher, the bishop of Rochester, England, was one of the most renowned scholars of the land, a friend of Erasmus, who alone among the English bishops refused to acquiesce in King Henry's adultery and pretension to being the Supreme Head of the Church in England. After imprisonment in the Tower, he was beheaded on June 22, 1535, and shares a day on the Church's calendar with another martyr, St. Thomas More. One wonders what, if anything, is taught about St. John Fisher at the college that bears his name. While hypocrisy may be the tribute that vice pays to virtue, one would like to think that somebody there might succumb to a twinge of decency and suggest a name change. And then there is Nazareth. I suppose it might be argued that the name is a purely geographic reference, although, admittedly, a rather odd one for upstate New York. Brighter students probably know that the school was named for somebody really famous who came from Nazareth, or visited Nazareth and, like, really liked it, or whatever.

■ Any number can play in this year's most popular political game, "What Democrats Must Do to Restore the Two-Party System." Some of us do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

believe it would be good to have another party; that it is not a good thing for one party to have a monopoly on the sensible answers to the really big questions—or a permanent predominance in elections. I'm not sure that William Voegeli believes that, but his *Claremont Review* essay is, in addition to being an astute analysis of Democrat problems and what needs to be done about them, a model of polemic in an elegant mode: "Bill Clinton was fond of saying that character is 'a journey, not a destination.' But to leave home without a destination, convinced that the very idea of a destination is arbitrary and false, is to embark on a 'journey' that will be no different from just wandering around. How, then, shall we live? The entirety of liberalism's answer is, according to Rawls, that it is better to play chess than checkers: 'human beings enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities (their innate or trained abilities), and this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized or the greater its complexity.' Humans can rescue their lives from meaninglessness by striving, however they pass their days, to employ more rather than fewer of their talents, finding new ones and expanding known ones, to the sole purpose of being able to enlarge them still further, endlessly. We have seen the future, and it's an adult education seminar, where ever-greater latitude is afforded to ever-smaller souls, and where freedom means nothing higher than the care and feeding of personal idiosyncrasies. As an ethical precept this position is risible. As the basis for social criticism, it is infuriating. *This* is the standard by which liberals judge us to be spiritually unemployed, the basis on which they are going to lift the level of our existence? Many Democrats lament that Republicans have been successful in getting working-class Americans to vote 'against their own interests,' by stressing social issues like abortion and gay marriage. Thomas Frank wrapped an entire bestseller, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, around this idea. It's a 'false consciousness' diagnosis that betrays rather than describes the Democrats' problem: the smug assumption that we know, far better than they do themselves, the 'real interests' of people who live in dorky places and went to schools no one has heard of."

■ If you liked that, perhaps I could interest you in a bit more. Voegeli recalls that at a 1964 rally in Providence Lyndon Johnson climbed atop his car, grabbed a bullhorn, and offered a summary of his party's political philosophy: "I just want to tell you this—we're in favor of a lot of things and we're against mighty few." Many people are saying that the Democrats have to make clear what they stand for. Voegeli thinks they have to explain what they stand against: "Tell us, if indeed it's true, that Democrats don't want to do for America what social democrats have done for France or Sweden. Tell us that the stacking of one government program on top of the other is going to stop, if indeed it will, well short of a public sector that absorbs half the nation's income and extensively regulates what we do with the other half. Explain how the spirit of live-and-let-live applies, if indeed it does, to everyone equally—to people who take family, piety, and patriotism seriously, not merely to people whose lives and outlooks are predicated on regarding them ironically."

■ According to Reuters, gay and lesbian organizations are in an uproar. It seems that male penguins in the zoo of Bremerhaven, Germany, have been attempting to mate with one another and to hatch offspring out of stones. The zoo has imported some female penguins from Scandinavia. In response to protests, the zoo's director, Heike Kueck, says, "Nobody here is trying to break up same-sex pairs by force. We don't know if the males are really gay or just got together because of a lack of females." The protesters are not appeased. Giving the penguins a choice would deprive them of the choice of being gay. And who knows whether, given time enough, the stones might hatch?

■ A red herring still successfully employed to distract attention from serious arguments about government funding of "faith-based organizations" is the claim that such organizations engage in "religious discrimination in hiring." Jeffrey Rosen of the *New Republic* puts the matter succinctly, "It's obvious on reflection that, without the ability to discriminate on the basis of religion in hiring and firing staff, religious organizations lose the right to define their organizational mission enjoyed by secular organizations that receive public funds." In other words, the charge of religious discrimination is but another instance of discrimination against religion. These questions are expertly addressed in a 170-page study from the Center for Public Justice in Washington, D.C. For more information on "The Freedom of Faith-Based Organizations to Staff on a Religious Basis," edited by Carl Esbeck and associates, contact *www.cpjustice.org*.

■ The annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, reliably attracts major media attention. It is a gathering of some two thousand presidents, prime ministers, treasury secretaries, and corporate CEOs and chairmen, with a small smattering of folks who are to address "values questions" in order to create moral uneasiness about Corporate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Social Responsibility, commonly referred to as "CSR." I was invited a few years ago and was duly impressed by the global display of egos and power on display. I have declined subsequent invitations, but it was almost worth going that one time for the panel discussion in which I questioned Nobel laureate James Watson on moral questions related to the Human Genome Project. He answered that I should not worry since the project had set aside several million dollars "to get the best ethicists that money can buy." Bret Stephens of the *Wall Street Journal* reports on this year's meeting: "Many of the sessions are devoted to managerial, technical, and scientific topics, and these are dealt with straightforwardly enough. But when it comes to politics, the Forum reflects a 'Davos Consensus'—that is, the clichés, nostrums, banalities, elisions, evasions, upstanding sentiments and lowest common denominators generated when people of differing views are at their most polite. Everyone gets along splendidly at Davos, but platitude is frequently the glue that holds them together. Then there are the weird attitudes of the business community, which seems besotted by something called Corporate Social Responsibility. Late Friday evening I am accosted by a prominent American CEO who apparently feels the need to set the record straight with the *Wall Street Journal*. He takes his CSR very, very seriously, he says, and then rattles on about his record. Indeed, CSR, like climate change, is a Davos Verity: One session here is titled 'Is Responsible Investment About To Pay Off?' Another one is, 'How Responsible Is Responsible Enough?' No prize for guessing where such discussions drift." Corporate Social Responsibility as measured by "The Davos Consensus," is a generally leftist and Eurocentric list of concerns almost always biased against America and America's role in the world. American participants such as George Soros, Ted Turner, and Al Gore do little to balance that perspective. CSR-thought is, it seems, a mix of capitalism with a bad conscience—and one notes that many capitalists should have a bad conscience—and a cynical judgment that buying off leftist ideologues is simply part of the cost of doing business. After Prime Minister Tony Blair gave his keynote address this year, Forum organizer Klaus Schwab asked him what business can do to improve the world. Blair responded, "The business community can make sure its businesses work well—and make a profit." I expect Mr. Stephens was not alone in welcoming the violation of the platitudinous "Davos Consensus."

■ Funny things continue to happen at the *New York Times*. Somehow a press release from the Society of Jesus got printed as a story under the headline, "Jesuits Show Strength, Even as Their Numbers Shrink." One thinks of St. Paul: "I am strong when I am weak" and "They call us dead men, yet we live." The release-report begins with a reference to "the lofty status of the Jesuits in the Catholic firmament [which] has always been supported by their remarkable universities." The putative evidence of Jesuit strength is that Boston College, a school "in the Jesuit tradition," has oodles of money with which it is buying up properties of the financially strapped Boston archdiocese. This would seem to overlook the fact that the Jesuits relinquished control of Boston College to a lay board years ago. The college may be rich, but the New England Jesuit Province has been hit by sex-abuse payouts much in the way the archdiocese has been hit. The Jesuits are, institutionally and otherwise, in a bad way. In 1960, they had 409 new recruits in the U.S. Last year they had sixty-five. In the last year alone 104 American Jesuits died and fifty-three left the order. Father Robert Manning, president of the Weston Jesuit School of Theology which is soon to be absorbed by Boston College, is quoted as saying, "It is certainly the case that we are getting smaller, but I see it as the religious life being restored to its proper minority status within the Church." Right. "I prefer to walk anyway," as the fellow said, climbing out of the wreck. Now I must ask my Jesuit friends, of whom I have more than you might think, to hold off on their protests. This item is only indirectly about the Jesuits. It is mainly about the *Times* mistakenly running a press release as a news story.

■ "The old joke that academic controversies are so bitter because so little is at stake misses a major point. Unlike the larger, public realm, where most citizens have only a tangential interest in vindicating their opinions and even political leaders can walk away from conflicts after splitting the difference, in academe professional lives, fortunes, and—perhaps most sacred—personal self-esteem can hang on the outcome of even the most recondite disputes. Too often under such circumstances, yearnings to preserve a comfortable environment of orthodoxy trump the interest in maintaining free debate." That is Stephen Balch writing in the *Chronicle Review*. Balch is president of the National Association of Scholars and his essay, "The Antidote to Academic Orthodoxy," describes how John Dewey and Arthur O. Lovejoy, who founded the American Association of University Professors, were convinced that tenure and professorial self-governance were essential to protecting the academy from the pressures that so biased the news-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

papers. Balch observes, "Dewey and Lovejoy might well have found it remarkable that, even without the practice of tenure, American journalism provides a profitable home for a multitude of sophisticated commentators who dissent from its dominant opinion. The marketplace has apparently proved a more effective means of preserving reasoned diversity than the insulated self-governance of the professoriate." That the academy has become so insular and monocultural is perhaps not surprising, writes Balch. "Considered as constitutional systems, our institutions of higher learning are ill equipped to thwart the power of the over-bearing intellectual majorities that strong preferences and prejudices mobilize. In fact, academe's characteristic mode of governance magnifies majoritarian power. As polities, colleges and universities bear more than a passing resemblance to federations of small, semi-autonomous republics—in this case the departments that make up their main subdivisions. Those generally hire, give tenure, and promote their teaching staffs; fix major and graduate-studies requirements; admit and finance graduate students; award the doctorates that provide new practitioners with credentials; and help journeymen secure their initial jobs. The bigger and more prestigious the institution, the less the department is likely to be subject to serious oversight from above." Those who have fiduciary responsibility and who, not incidentally, pay the bills of both public and private universities are getting restless, says Balch. "Our universities would be wise to make the cause of intellectual diversity their own." I hope Balch is right about the restlessness of those in charge. And I hope educators have the wit to preempt their probably clumsy interventions by taking the initiative in putting their own house in order. But why should they? Especially if they have tenure? Because, answers Balch, "the university's mission is serving the cause of truth." That has about it the quaint ring of an idea that could someday spark a revolution.

■ A number of universities around the country are accommodating transgendered, transsexual, and otherwise ambiguously self-identified persons who protest the heteronormativity of restrooms designated for men and women. Matthew Rose, a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, former FT editorial assistant, and legendary football star of Wabash College reports: "The University of Chicago has just supplied us with a number of bathrooms for those 'uncomfortable' about classifying themselves within the hegemonic taxonomies of bourgeois heteronormativity. The new bathrooms are private and much nicer than the bathrooms for those of us who have timidly accepted the social construction of our maleness or femaleness. They are so much nicer, in fact, that I use them regularly. When I was confronted about using the bathroom by a confused looking 'somebody,' I simply replied, 'I'm not comfortable calling myself a man on this campus.'" Heteronormativism. Add it to the list of things of which you are probably guilty.

■ Res Publica, which describes itself as a public interest group, which is about what one would expect from an organization named Res Publica, is sponsoring a project called "Abortion and Values: An Interfaith Consensus." The process will involve a software program called Synanim that "allows hundreds of people to collectively draft a statement." That will be followed by a "closed meeting of key stakeholders in the progressive faith community," who will draft the final statement and try to gain maximum publicity for what will be announced as a new religious consensus on abortion. Some who are known for their definite pro-life convictions have been invited to participate in this project and have declined for very good reasons. The way the questions are framed in the project proposal, plus some of the key leaders and participating organizations, suggest that this is yet another of many initiatives in recent months to soften the image of pro-abortionists. The proposal cites favorably the essay by Frances Kissling, head of Catholics for a Free Choice, as an "attempt to open a more nuanced conversation" (see my discussion of the Kissling essay in the March issue). Glen Stassen, an anti-Bush activist and professor of ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary whose arguments have been employed by Senator Hillary Clinton, is another key player in the project. The consensus at which the project aims is intended to overcome polarization and de-politicize the controversy over abortion, which, being translated, means to preserve the status quo of the unlimited abortion license. Or at least, now that the pro-choicers are on the defensive, to keep the license as unlimited as is politically possible. Prolifers who know their nursery rhymes will decline the invitation to the parlor of Res Publica.

■ Yes, I got up to Central Park to take a look at the big project of Christo Javacheff and his partner Jeanne-Claude, 7,500 steel gates hung with orange nylon along twenty-three miles of park paths. On first look, it seemed a tacky display that had the saving merit of lasting only sixteen days. Myron Magnet, editor of *City Journal*, got more worked up about it: "For all the cant about the artist as liberator of the human spirit, there is much in contemporary art and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

especially architecture that seeks to impose upon individuals the artist's vast ego and confine them within it, so that they cannot escape his will. It is this whiff of totalitarianism that makes Polish intellectuals label such architecture 'neo-oppressionism.'" While I agree with my friend Myron's view of much contemporary architecture, his alarm is something of a reach with respect to the Christo lark. Christo is a master of publicity who, as in wrapping Berlin's Reichstag in plastic, takes adolescent—some would say child-like—delight in doing what has not been done before. Distributing 7,500 garbage pails around Central Park with a teddy bear atop each might be as creative, if creativity is measured by novelty. Ask any twelve-year-old about other really cool things that might be done. "The Gates" was, or so it seems to me, an innocent exultation. I am reminded of John Gielgud watching a fireworks display: "I do so love fireworks. They are so unnecessary." Yes, the $20 million, as Judas might complain, could have been given to the poor. But it is now reported that the cost was considerably less than $20 million, and it is estimated the city reaped more than $200 million from the curious thousands who flew in to witness the once-in-a-lifetime display. Like P.T. Barnum, Christo and the Bloomberg administration are not indifferent to the potential in a sucker being born every minute. Had it lasted much more than sixteen days, the whiff of totalitarianism might have become detectable. As it was, however, "The Gates" was more like a 1960s "happening," although a good deal more decorous. It was an indulgence of high spirits or, at worst, a vulgar exhibit of personal vanity and artistic vacuity. This is New York. One gets used to things, for better and worse.

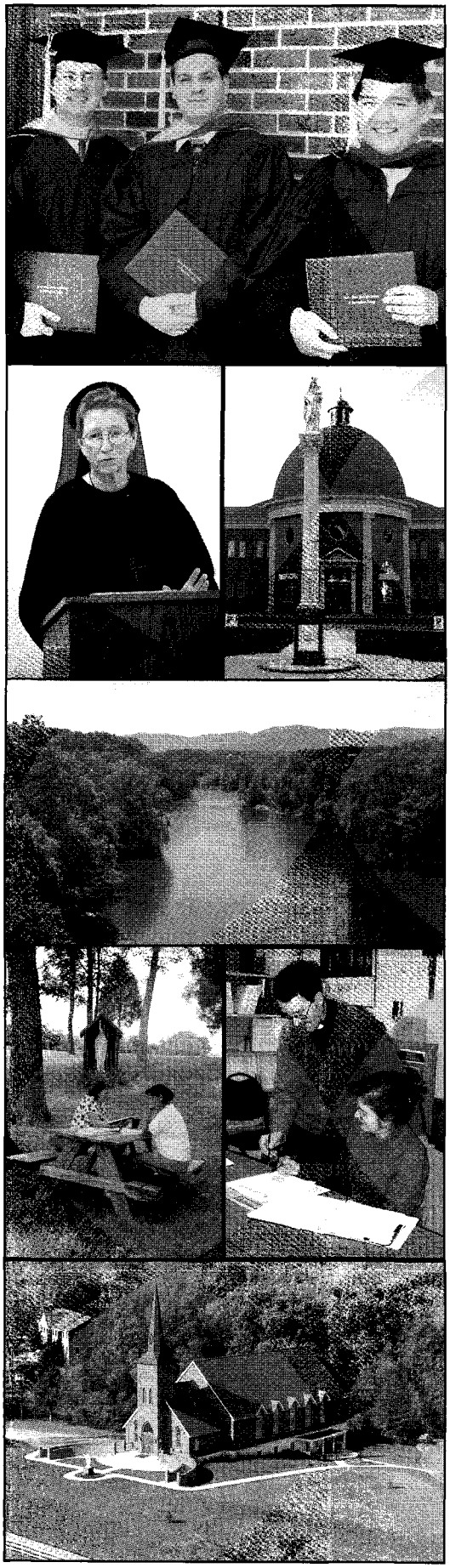
■ New groups of ROFTERS (Readers of FIRST THINGS) are cropping up at a most remarkable rate. We will post newly formed groups and contact information for their conveners as promptly as possible, along with already established groups, on the website, *www.firstthings.com*. Please go there to see if there is a group near you. If you wish to convene a ROFTERS group, please contact Erik Ross at *er@firstthings.com*. These are independent groups. How often they meet and the format of discussions are questions left entirely to conveners and their ROFTER friends. Of course it is very gratifying to the editors that there is such interest in exploring with others the questions addressed in the journal, and we thank all of you for your interest.

■ *Next month in the Public Square: Terri Schiavo and a nation on trial.*

Sources: Frank Rich on dirty jokes, *New York Times*, March 12.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Papal "deathwatch," *National Post*, February 26. Hunter S. Thompson, Jeff Jacoby column, March 4. Israel and the End Times, *New York Sun*, February 16. Political transformations and the UN, Holbrooke in *New York Times*, February 28. The Democrats and power, *Claremont Review of Books*, Winter 2004. Voegeli asks what Democrats stand against, *Claremont Review of Books*, Winter 2004. Gay German pengins, Reuters, February 11. Platitudes from Davos, *Wall Street Journal*, January 31. The *Times* speaks up for the Jesuits, *New York Times*, December 12, 2004. Academic orthodoxy, *Chronicle Review*, April 23, 2004. "The Gates" and neo-oppressionism, Myron Magnet in *New York Sun*, February 16.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Begin earning your

Master of Arts
in
Theological Studies

at
Christendom College's
Notre Dame Graduate School Summer Program

June 20 - July 30, 2005

Come spend six weeks on Christendom College's beautiful campus overlooking the Shenandoah River studying theology and working toward your Master of Arts in Theological Studies.

- ✔ *Concentrations in Catechetics, Systematic Theology, & Moral Theology*
- ✔ *Apostolic Catechetical Diploma*
- ✔ *40 Years of Training Leaders for the New Evangelization*
- ✔ *Year-round program in Alexandria, VA*
- ✔ *$795 per three-credit course*
- ✔ *Discounts for auditors, catechists, and senior citizens*
- ✔ *Finish Master's Degree coursework in 4 summers*

The beautiful riverside campus with its full range of academic, spiritual, and recreational possibilities provides a perfect milieu for study, prayer, and good times that make up Christian academic community life.

CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

Front Royal, VA Alexandria, VA
800.877.5456 www.christendom.edu/grad

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONFERENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND
GARAVENTA CENTER FOR CATHOLIC
INTELLECTUAL LIFE AND AMERICAN CULTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
CENTER FOR ETHICS AND CULTURE

invite your participation in a conference examining the intersection of the Catholic intellectual life and American culture:

TEACHING, FAITH, AND SERVICE
THE FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM

University of Portland
Oregon's Catholic University
June 2-4, 2005

The theme of the conference is rooted in the identity of the sponsoring institutions as Catholic, Holy Cross, and American institutions of higher learning which are uniquely situated, and hence especially obligated, to contribute to the intellectual, moral, and religious development of our communities to serve the common good, to develop a just and lasting social order, and to understand the role of freedom and religion as they together guide the flourishing of this nation and its people. Among the topics to be explored are: the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being, the equitable distribution of the goods of the earth, the social responsibility of business, the care of the earth, children and poverty, abortion, war, terrorism, pacifism, capital punishment, physician assisted suicide, the transformative power of the culture, and the revitalization of colleges and universities.

Invited speakers:

The Honorable John T. Noonan, U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit / Rev. David B. Burrell, C.S.C., University of Notre Dame / Rev. E. William Beauchamp, C.S.C., University of Portland / Professor Jorge Garcia, Boston College / Rev. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Gonzaga University / David Solomon, Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture / Professor Laura Garcia, Boston College / Professor Ralph McInerny, University of Notre Dame. Rev. William Byron, S.J., Loyola University / Professor Steven A. Kolmes, University of Portland / Sr. Carol J. Dempsey, University of Portland / Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., University of Notre Dame.

Contact and registration:

For more information and to register, please view the conference website at *http://lewis.up.edu/CAS/McNerney-Hanson/events.htm,* or contact: Margaret Monahan Hogan, Ph.D. / McNerney-Hanson Professor of Ethics / Executive Director, Garaventa Center for Catholic Intellectual Life and American Culture / University of Portland / 5000 North Willamette Blvd. / Portland, OR 97203-5798 / 503-943-7771.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED